

Edith Sichel

August 1913

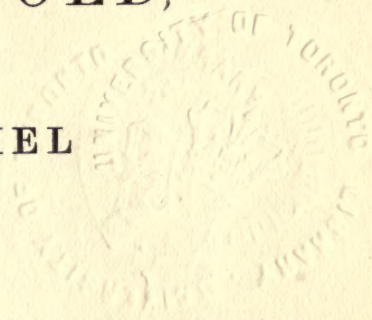
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NEW AND OLD,

BY

EDITH SICHEL



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

A. C. BRADLEY

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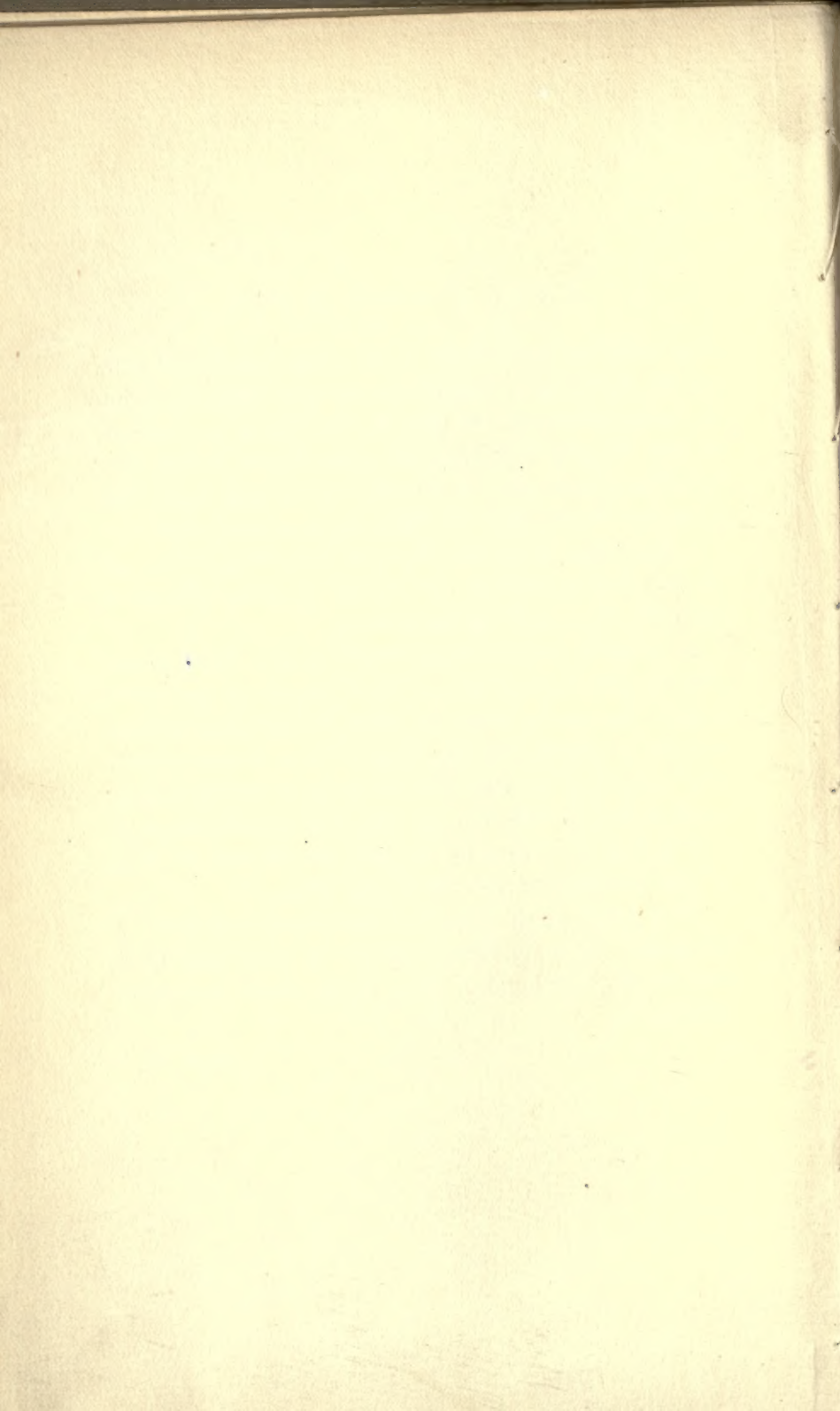
THE 'Old' in this volume is the matter previously published. It begins at page 97, and for permission to reprint it acknowledgments are due to the owners and editors of *The Cornhill Magazine*, *The Anglo-Saxon Review*, *The Monthly Review*, *The Nineteenth Century and After*, *The Pilot*, *The Nation*, and *The Times Literary Supplement*.

I must also thank Mr. Edward Armstrong, Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, who revised my choice of articles from *The Times Literary Supplement*.

As I had the happiness of friendship with Edith Sichel only towards the close of her life, it would not have been possible for me to write my short Introduction without the aid of others, and especially of Miss Emily Ritchie. The reader will see that this Introduction makes no pretence to furnish a Memoir, or even such recollections as he may find in an article by the late Vice-Provost of Eton in *The Cornhill Magazine* for August 1915.

The portrait which forms the frontispiece reproduces a 'snapshot' taken in 1913. That which faces page 96 is from a photograph taken when Edith Sichel was about twenty-five.

A. C. B.



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INTRODUCTION

EDITH SICHEL was born in December, 1862, and died in the summer of 1914. Her parents were Jewish by descent, and in religion Christians. London, her birthplace, continued throughout her life to be her home. She was known to the reading public as a writer of books and of papers in magazines; and she also contributed unsigned articles to the *Pilot* in 1901, and to the Literary Supplement of the *Times* from that year onwards. To a large circle of acquaintances and friends she was known as a hostess, guest, or companion, whose society was made delightful by her buoyancy and gaiety, her spontaneous and sometimes exuberant flow of wit and humour, her quick and vivid intellect, the width and keenness of her interests, her pleasure in discussion, her entire freedom from vanity or egotism, her kindness, and her enjoyment of other people's enjoyment. By the members of her family and by her intimate friends she was deeply loved and (strange as the word would have sounded to her) revered. Finally, she was known to a host of poor people, and especially of poor girls, to whom she gave without stint her time, her means, her mind and her heart. And in all these aspects of her life, on which I will say something in turn, she showed, in an eminent degree, one and the same nature, character, and way of regarding life.

Though Edith Sichel's love of books could hardly have been stronger than her love of Nature and of Art, the subjects of most of her own writings came to her through books. And

the majority of these subjects, though she read widely in various languages, were either English or French. She was versed in German literature, enjoyed greatly her visits to picture-galleries and museums in Germany, and supremely the musical festivals she attended there; and, as it happened, in the last months of her life was delighting two young friends by the lessons she gave them on *Faust*. During some years of her earlier life she went from time to time, with Mary Coleridge and other companions, to the house of the old scholar-poet, William Cory, to read Greek authors with him.¹ But in her writings she never dealt with, and rarely referred to, the history or literature of Germany or of Greece. Italy, again, certainly filled a large space in her mind and affections. Her letters show that she was intensely happy there, and how truly she felt and could render in words the spirit of its towns, of the country surrounding them, and of the artists or the saints to whom she was most drawn; and in writing her last book, a little volume on the Renaissance, she especially welcomed the chance of speaking something of her mind on Leonardo, Michael Angelo, and Raphael.² Yet it remains true that, for the purposes of her work, her main studies were French and English; and further, that, although in short articles she dealt with various English authors (not often her special favourites), the subjects of her principal books were almost exclusively French.

In the later eighties her favourite French authors seem to have been George Sand and Sainte-Beuve; and it was partly to the latter, partly to her friend, Emily Ritchie, that she owed her introduction to French memoirs. On

¹ See Mary Coleridge's very interesting notes of Mr. Cory's remarks, *Gathered Leaves*, pp. 287-336. The authors named are Xenophon, Plato, and Sophocles.

² I do not mean to imply that the last of these three was among the artists who attracted her most. It is right to add that this book was composed in enforced haste, and, though brilliant in parts, in other parts and in respect of accuracy fails to reach her usual level.

the study of these she began, about 1890, to concentrate ; and this study, extending its bounds, led to the composition of her best-known and most valuable works. The first two volumes of the series, the *Story of Two Salons* (1895), and the *Household of the Lafayettes* (1897), dealt with the era of the Revolution. From this she went back to the sixteenth century, and produced in 1901 *Women and Men of the French Renaissance*, in 1905 *Catherine de Medici and the French Reformation*, in 1907 *The Later Years of Catherine de Medici*, and finally, in 1911, *Michel de Montaigne*. Thus the French Renaissance may be described as her principal subject, and one on which she made herself an authority. But during the years of her work on it she found time for the *Life* of her friend Canon Ainger (1906), for the beautiful memoir of Mary Coleridge which forms the Introduction to *Gathered Leaves* (1910), and also for a large number of articles on a great variety of topics, not confined to history and literature.

Edith Sichel studied the subjects of her principal books with conscientious labour, and these books were warmly praised by judges competent (as I am not) to estimate their value as contributions to French biography and history. But she did not write primarily for experts ; nor again was she specially interested in political movements and events. What chiefly attracted her was the spirit of a time and country, and even more the minds, characters, and surroundings of individuals. Into these she entered with an alert imagination and almost unfailing zest. She treated them with a degree of impartiality surprising in a writer of such decided sympathies and antipathies. And she so depicted them that the reader's interest is caught at once, continues to increase, and is left unexhausted. There were several reasons for this result. Her own mind was so vivacious that no amount of research could diminish its animation or retard the alacrity of its movement. She was

an artist in selection and in the disposition of the selected material. And she wrote fluently, commanding a rich vocabulary, and a style which was individual and readily recognised, but quite free from mannerism or traces of design. These merits far outweigh some corresponding defects. She had not in youth the severe training which makes for perfect accuracy. Nor were her judgments always fully considered. William Cory told her not to 'make such leaps'; and, though she took his warning to heart, her eager mind never ceased to need it.

The characteristic qualities visible in the longer works reappear in the review-articles taken from the *Times Literary Supplement*.¹ Indeed, Edith Sichel was nowhere more fully and uniformly successful as a writer than in these articles. Her first object—it is one too frequently neglected by reviewers—was to let the reader know what kind of matter he might expect to find in the book, and, if necessary, from what point of view it is treated there. As her interests were catholic, and her gift of seizing quickly and presenting vividly the essential features of a subject was remarkable, the effect on the reader generally is that he not only gets this information, but enjoys reading the article and often wishes to pursue the subject further, while he can judge from the critical remarks, usually brief and decided, whether he had better pursue it in the book under review.² This is the effect even when he can see from the article that the reviewer herself had no expert knowledge of the matter in hand (and of such articles a few are included in the present volume); but naturally a stronger personal interest and a more lasting value belong to those in which the writer deals with her own subjects. This personal interest is heightened in the case of the *Thoughts* and the *Extracts from Letters*. In these two sections of the present volume there

¹ The articles reprinted here form perhaps a fifth of the total contributed.

² These have sometimes been omitted in the reprint.

appear, more prominently than elsewhere, and in a more distinctly stated form, the chief ideas and beliefs which governed both her view of life and her way of living it. The *Letters*, which differ comparatively little in style from the published writings, show how easily and naturally she wrote. They recall her conversation at once, and indeed are so characteristic that they give an almost perfect picture of her. The *Thoughts* were written down merely for herself or for a few friends, and, though there are good aphorisms among them, they were not essays in aphoristic art. Indeed, the title which she gave to the little manuscript book from which most of them are taken, was not *Thoughts* but *Fool-Flashes*.

Almost, if not quite, the first thing that Edith Sichel wrote for publication was *Jenny*, the story of a girl in Wapping, which appeared in the *Cornhill* for December, 1887. In her earliest book, *Worthington Junior* (1893)—a novel which, in spite of its merits, did not point to a vocation for that form of literature—the most successful incidents and characters belonged to Whitechapel. Some twenty years later she composed, and intended to publish, the remarkable story *Gladys Leonora Pratt*, printed in this volume. In all these cases she wrote from an intimate knowledge gained in the East End; and, during the whole period of her literary production, she was incessantly busy in work of various kinds on behalf of the poor. The fact is so characteristic of her that a brief record must be given of these practical activities.

They began when, in her twenty-third year, she joined the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants.¹ She had to find in their own homes the girls whom she

¹ She joined the Whitechapel Branch, and so came into contact with Canon and Mrs. Barnett. The paper on *Saints and Mystics*, printed in this volume, contains a reference to Canon Barnett, of whose inspiring influence she spoke at a memorial meeting in the last year of her life.

befriended, and also the mistresses, usually in somewhat humble life, who took them into service, and from whom they often ran away. Thus she was led into what she called 'the mad world' of Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, or Shadwell, 'the world of raging mistresses, frenzied Elizas, and perturbing Carolines.' Her reports show into what noisome quarters of this world she sometimes penetrated; what courage, persistence, and sound judgment accompanied her passionate desire to help; and on what perfectly friendly terms this desire may stand with an irrepressible sense of humour. In spite of the weakness of her health she pursued this work with the utmost fervour until, after some years, the doctor's orders brought it to an end.

It ceased, however, only to be continued in a less exacting shape. Through it she had formed her lifelong friendship with Miss Emily Ritchie; and when, in 1889, the two friends began to share a cottage at Chiddingfold, there soon began also the experiment of transplanting into the country girl-children from an East End workhouse, with others who had no responsible parent. For such children she started at Chiddingfold a Home, afterwards moved to Hambledon when the friends built their own cottage there. In this Home they were trained for domestic situations, which in due time were found for them, and in which her tender hold on them was maintained. A few years later she went on to set up, close by, a second Home, with a laundry, for older girls in poor health. But this experiment proved less successful and, after five years, was abandoned, while the children's Home was still flourishing when she died.

Always preferring to work independently of committees, and ready to give away half her income, she sought for no outside help in these enterprises, which naturally involved a great deal of labour in the way of business as well as much anxious responsibility. Yet to this she added, soon after her own Home was founded, the duties of treasurer to

an admirable Home for Boys in Islington, kept by a friend whose striking gifts did not include any marked capacity for business. For twenty-two years, until this Home was closed, she not only acted as its treasurer, but exerted herself indefatigably in maintaining and enlarging the subscriptions on which it depended.

Another of her interests was education. From 1893 to 1905 she acted as a manager of Ashburnham and Park Walk Schools in Chelsea; and adding, as usual, to her official duties, she made personal friends among the teachers, herself took classes (at one time a weekly class in history), gave parties to the children; and whether she came to her class or her party, the head-mistress tells us, she 'scattered joy.'

By 1905 she had become deeply impressed by the importance of starting young people, on leaving school, in some employment; and so she began to work with this object. For five or six years she carried on the work single-handed, finding for her *protégés* training-places, situations, and, in case of need, the money required for apprenticeship; with the result that, when her private enterprise was merged in that of the Chelsea Apprenticeship Committee, the names of sixty or seventy boys and girls were counted in her books.

Finally, towards the end of 1911, she made what may be called a return, with a difference, to the kind of social work with which in her girlhood she had begun. Her sister, Mrs. Hopkins, had been for some time a visitor at Holloway Gaol, and Edith was now invited by the chaplain to hold a class there for female prisoners. Once a fortnight, when she was in London, during these last years of her life, she held this class of young women and girls. Her plan was to read to them, or, more often, to tell them in her own words, stories taken, it might be, from Tolstoi's *Parables* or the *Lives of the Saints*, and presenting a picture of truth-

fulness or purity or kindness ; and then, without attempting to enforce a moral, she would ask the question : ‘ Now, don’t you think that nice of her ? ’ or, ‘ Wouldn’t you like to do a kind thing like that ? ’ or, ‘ Wouldn’t you like somebody to say that of you ? ’ She had undertaken this task with much diffidence, and nothing that she had ever done tried her more. But it was not her way to count the cost of love ; and this, the most painful of her labours, was among the most successful. In it, too, as in the others, she was not content to make a gift and pass on, but, so far as time and strength allowed, continued to follow with her help and guidance those whose trust or affection she had won.

Edith Sichel’s practical activities were, naturally, unknown to the great majority of those who read her books ; but this is not the only reason why they are recounted here. The fact that she carried them on side by side with continuous literary work was very characteristic of her ; while her ability to combine with apparent ease, and in spite of the weakness of her health, two occupations so different and usually found so conflicting, was a source of wonder to her friends. How it was that she was able to do this may incidentally appear if I now try to recall some traits of her character and of her way of looking at life.

Those philanthropic activities, it will have been noticed, were almost all concerned with children or young people. Her love for the young, her joy in them, and her hold on them, were no less marked in her private life. To little children she was a fairy godmother. She showered gifts on her girl-relatives and girl-friends, and enjoyed nothing better than devising treats and jaunts for their pleasure. I have mentioned the weekly lessons on *Faust* that she was giving in the last months of her life ; and she had been holding such small classes in literature or history then for

ten or twelve years. Nor did she merely teach. To the end she never lost the power of entering, with eager sympathy and on terms of free discussion, into that mental world of a new generation which, to its predecessors, is commonly a region rather surmised than known. Such conversations might leave her amused or perturbed as well as enlightened, but she came to them as a comrade and fellow-seeker, whose experience might be of use, but who had herself plenty to learn.

Her older friends—her contemporaries or seniors—if they read what has been said of her relations with the young, will feel that, *mutatis mutandis*, it holds good of her relations with themselves. They will echo the words of M. André Beaunier, ‘Elle avait la *religion* de l’amitié,’ and may say that to describe her would be to describe a perfect friend. To do this is needless, but a word of caution may be added. She had that passion for giving which makes giving-up a pure pleasure, and the way to delight her was to ask of her; but to give to her was to delight her too, and there was in her no trace of the disagreeable quality sometimes suggested by the words ‘self-effacing,’ ‘humble,’ or ‘saintly.’ In discussion, for example, though she was not controversial and liked companionship in thinking, her attitude was—as indeed it was everywhere—direct and sturdy. If she found a statement obscure she said so; if she doubted or demurred to it you knew that at once; if it touched any idea that she valued, she refused to leave it in abeyance. She could think and feel as impersonally as any man, but she had plenty of personality.

To be habitually helpful, loving, and a good friend comes to no one by instinct, but still a strong impulse to be so lay in Edith Sichel’s nature. One may, perhaps, signal out three other marked traits of her native disposition. Those who knew her well in her youth unite in speaking of her fervour, and the ardour with which she threw herself

into all that appealed to her. One of them applies to her Wordsworth's line, 'A creature of a fiery heart'; and, even thirty years later, it was impossible to imagine her lethargic or tepid. At the same time she was inclined by nature not merely to serious but to brooding thought. 'She used to remind me,' wrote an early friend, 'of Michael Angelo's *Penseroso*, not only in the cast of her countenance, but in the sidelong droop of the head, when "entering on thoughts abstruse."' She never lost this look in moments of abstraction, and the resemblance was no mere fancy. 'But,' the writer goes on, 'the power of enjoyment was as vivid, the sudden lighting of the face into humour or delight as striking.' And this last trait, usually the most obvious at a first meeting with her, was far from being merely superficial. Her temperament, ardent and yet deeply serious, was also buoyant, gay, one might almost add mercurial; her expression frequently one of brilliant animation; fun danced in her beautiful eyes; her talk sparkled with wit and humour, and she was never more typically herself than at times when she let herself loose in hilarious nonsense and extravagant gambols of the mind. In her youth, we are told, her companions at such moments 'sat round her in fits of laughter'; and so it was to the last. To reproduce her talk at these moments is impossible, but some notion of it may be gathered from the farcical description of an *Eisteddfod* in one of her letters (Extract 5), or even from the following passage in a Whitechapel report (the names are changed, though the report is thirty years old):

'Eliza Smith.—I went to her home and, for the first time, have ceased to wonder that she is so dirty. Any one with such pitch-black parents could not be otherwise. An inkier couple does not tread Africa. I saw Mr. S. for the first time. . . . The usual hunt for Eliza's address came off, Mrs. S. darting about here and there, like an Ethiopian

weasel, and diving into pots and pans, corners and tea-cups, from which she fished out countless envelopes smothered in dust—none of them Eliza's. At last she gave a frantic leap towards the ceiling and snatched piles of black papers from behind all the pictures and frames—jumping up and down with sudden jerks and quips—and giving short pants for breath—looking, for all the world, like a large acrobatic smut. One longed to brush her away. I believe that she, Père Smith, and Eliza are all made out of fog, and that it was the fact of Eliza's being in a temper that caused all those fogs last week. She is going to leave her place, as the son of the house hit her across the shoulders; and I have written to her to come to us.'

The report from which this extract is taken is full of sordid and painful facts, and is laden with sorrow and pity; but it was pure gain, both to the writer and to those whom she longed to help, that her heart and her sense of humour were active together, and did not impede each other; and to this happy union and the buoyancy of her temperament she doubtless owed in part her success in habitually combining philanthropic with literary work, and the apparent ease with which she passed from one to the other.

But there were much deeper causes of this success, and they concerned her whole outlook upon life, her attitude towards it, and her preferences in art and literature. She was not inclined to any facile form of optimism, but still she believed in human nature and did not fear it. In her view it contains nothing inherently evil. The whole stuff of it is capable of being moulded by sufficient effort into something fine, and is the opportunity of this transforming action. Hence she faced, not without distress but without dismay, the evils which she laboured to lessen; and one might even say that her sympathy was diminished by nothing that had in it life and energy, and that, if she could have despaired

of any one, it would not have been the sinner but the sluggard or the frivolous. I well remember her deep anxiety and unremitting efforts on behalf of a poor girl imprisoned for a violent crime due to jealousy; but the *crux* of the matter for her was not the crime, but her failure to make the criminal see that the crime was bad; and when at last she succeeded in this she was sure that the upward way was open. As her writings show, she was much attracted by the saintly character; but its ardour, its love, and its happiness were the sources of the attraction, and any mere asceticism repelled her. Among writers, too, the rich, expansive, forward-looking natures appealed to her most. In the *Women and Men of the French Renaissance* there is an admirable chapter on Rabelais, an author whom, according to Besant, no woman can read, but, for her, a prophet with a vision of the liberated human spirit. It was this that she missed in Montaigne, of whom she wrote with sympathy and insight but with much less gusto, and whom she calls (in a letter) a 'mountain-hating thinker,' 'Montaigne who understood Monday so well and Sunday so little.'

There was nothing one-sided or extreme in the tendency I am describing, though it was occasionally expressed in terms which might mislead. For instance, in the *Thoughts* (68-72), the 'love' in which she believed is sharply contrasted with 'morality,' the laws of which are said to mean only 'extended fear.' What is here called 'morality' is obviously one particular kind of morality, and what is contrasted with it is a higher and more adequate kind. Her preference for the latter, for 'goodness' or 'love,' is thoroughly characteristic, but her language might suggest that she sympathised with the fashion of 'a-moralism,' or even that 'love' meant for her something sentimental or something reckless. No idea could have less foundation. The description of life as an adventure appealed to her strongly,

but the adventure, for her, was like that of Rabbi Ben Ezra, a 'high enterprise' or 'spiritual romance.'¹ Though she often enjoyed it with all her heart and believed it should be happy, she never supposed that the possibilities of human nature could be elicited without effort, abnegation, or pain. If she had been asked to name the first gift she would choose to give, were such things giveable, to the young people whom she tried to help, she would probably have answered, 'Self-control.' 'Love,' she wrote, 'is the most austere discipline of life, as well as its sweetest balm.' She herself was as strong as she was kind. She delighted to 'scatter joy'; no bound was set to her sympathy either with sorrow or with failings; the words of a friend, 'you could say anything to her,' are true; but so are the words of another, 'she had the uncompromising sternness of love.' Hence she recognised the presence of love in shapes that may seem its enemies, and called duty 'love hardened and extended beyond the personal sphere.' She regarded Tolstoi with the utmost veneration, and much of his gospel was a gospel for her; but the application of some of his ideas she decisively rejected. Punishment, she said, is not the opposite of forgiveness, it is 'the reversed torch of love, and none the less a light in darkness because it is reversed'; and, while private judgment on the sinner is wrong, judgment of the sin is love of the sinner.

Thus her attitude to life may perhaps best be defined as one of glad and grateful acceptance on condition of transformation. Life, in her view, brings much that is pure and unsought joy, more perhaps that needs this transforming effort, little or nothing that cannot be made to contribute to an inward and abiding happiness. It was in this spirit that she aided others, and strove to deal with her own life. For example, she was well acquainted with pain, but she

¹ Her own phrases, about work in the East End, in the memorial speech on Canon Barnett and the character of his influence,

neither yielded to it nor rebelled against it; she used it. 'I have been travelling,' she wrote once, 'in my own fatherland of Pain, which has its special prospects and experiences, though the inns there are uncomfortable and expensive.'¹ Again, the law of our life, as of nature, is change:

Nothing can be as it has been before;
Better, so call it, only not the same:

and this hurts us; but every present, as it comes, has its unique good to offer, and we should not only accept it but welcome it with hospitality, and should give the same welcome to that which succeeds it.² 'I am glad,' she wrote in a birthday letter to Mary Coleridge, 'that *you* are getting older, as I know it means greater happiness for you than youth could possibly mean . . . and that is the greatest compliment one could pay to any human being.' It is so because this increase of happiness implies in the human being who possesses it that constant work of transformation. And this again—it is another main point in her faith—means a continuous growth, in which the past lives on, and which is as secure as anything human can be against the accidents of the future. 'The most blessed thing in it all,' she wrote in another letter, 'seems to me that, in spite of outward circumstances and personal ills and aches, something mysterious keeps on growing inside one, which makes more and more for happiness.' This real 'happiness,' which is sharply contrasted with mere 'pleasure,' and which frivolity can never know, cannot be lost: 'when happiness has once sat upon the hearth, the fire is always alight' (*Thoughts*, 17); 'the comforting thing in life is that happiness comes from within, not from without, and that it lives apart from sorrow or any of the assaults of life and death; and that, the more we love, the more it comes to the strange rolling

¹ See *Poems*, 4.

² See the opening numbers in the series of *Thoughts*.

years. . . . Amidst all the deep floods of sorrow, it is a blessed fact that to wholesome and unselfish minds life itself is holy, and its *real* interests do not jar with death.' And so, as she undoubtingly believed, whatever the change called death may involve, it cannot mean the cessation of this continuous growth and happiness.

The way of regarding life which I have been describing and illustrating, was partly formed and constantly sustained by meditation and reflection, and it amounted to a belief or faith. And was not this, it may be asked, also a religious belief or faith? No one who knew Edith Sichel at all intimately could hesitate in answering this question, and a single sentence in one of her letters may give the answer: 'The immanence of God and the life of Christ are my treasures.' But this religious belief was not a theological creed. Neither the native cast of her mind nor the course of her studies inclined her in any marked degree to philosophical or theological theory; and the value of her faith does not lie in the systematic connection or completeness of her ideas. Theories, moral, theological, or æsthetic, are frequently of small account because their authors, with an unusual gift for analysis or system, have only an average personal experience of the matter they attempt to theorise. Hers was the opposite case. Her religious faith, her ways of looking at life and art and literature, her attitude to the human beings whom she saw with her eyes or imagined from the record left of them, sprang directly from her experience, and were in turn tested by it. This experience, whether grave or gay, was exceptionally vivid and whole-hearted; while the variety of her own nature and interests, the number of her friends and *protégés*, and her wonderful power of imaginative and practical sympathy, gave it also an unusual width. And, since it was both truly and happily expressed in what she wrote, the following pages will show her to strangers infinitely better than

any words of mine, and to others will recall at every turn hours and days and years radiant with the light of her wit and laughter, and glowing with the warmth of her generous and loving heart.

A. C. BRADLEY.

NEW AND OLD

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS¹

1

I OFTEN think, when I am wandering through the picturesque mire of Wapping, that there would be far more essential good in the work if the picturesqueness were taken away; if the poor were quite respectable though just as needy, the streets clean, the hovels houses. Picturesqueness—moral, mental, and outward—lends a glamour which detracts from the disinterestedness of one's work. I always feel wholesomely humiliated in the East-end by the fact of the people I see being much better than me; they rise so much higher above their circumstances than I do over mine, and ought to be visiting me!

If one could only implant in them the idea of loving *fellowship* among themselves, which, after all, is Christianity; if one could teach them through the human to reach the Divine! (1885.)

2

TALKING of beams reminds me that I have lost my heart . . . to Shrewsbury. Twice during my migrations I have had to wait for my train there, and have employed these spare hours, like a good busy little girl, by getting on hand-shaking terms with Shrewsbury. It suits me perfectly, and presently, when Shadwell has been reduced to a Belgravian

¹ [With a few exceptions the following extracts are arranged in chronological order, an arrangement which has a biographical value, though it produces some sharp contrasts in subject and tone. They have been chosen mainly to illustrate characteristics of the writer, and in particular some which do not fully appear in the reprinted papers, or are barely mentioned in the Introduction; for example, the delight in natural beauty and in works of art, which was obvious even on a slight acquaintance with her.]

stolidity and Whitechapel to a Mayfair monotony, I shall migrate there. What a dear ramshackle old place it is, with harum-scarum houses and ill-regulated shops and streets running no man knows why, for some lead nowhere at all. And the oddest houses, black and white and lattice-windowed, jump out upon you where you expect them least. And the streets are called 'Mardol' and 'Dog pole' and 'Butcher's Row' and 'Pride Hill.' The cakes were made in Eden, and the market is full of real, live, farmers' daughters, selling real golden butter and ruddy plums. . . .

Here I still pasture à la sheep and return to my muttons daily. Do you find that one's feeling to Nature changes with advancing years? I used to believe in your ¹ great progenitor's

O Lady, we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live.

But now I don't any longer. The great Mother of us all has a holy charm to soothe me which nobody else has. If we come to her determined to make her into a Proteus who changes form with every one of our passions, our thoughts, our feelings, she will act like a wise mother, and teach us our folly by complying with our request. But if we come to her like wayward children as we are, and lie down in her lap and let her do as she will with us, surely she will hush us to rest almost like rest eternal, and to the peace which passeth all understanding. (1885.)

3

[*Report of Whitechapel Girls*]

HARRIET WEBB

Oh, what a black and tangled web we weave
When first with Webb we practise to deceive,
And fondly dream we may reclaim her youth
And tame her—savage, smutty and uncouth,

¹ [The letter was addressed to Mary Coleridge.]

With surly visage dyed by ebon soot,
And voice deep-buried in her left-hand boot ;
Then flee from hope, nor yet to learn refuse
That Guardian-angels aren't the slightest use.
And this is all the cheer we dare rehearse,
That, though she can't improve, she can't be worse.

Poor thing ! her mistress is really an angel to keep her. She told me wonderful legends of how Harriet rails at her if she stops out, and opens the door on her return with ' It 's me 'as 'ad the pleasure, isn't it now ? ' and how she rushes into the work-room and makes all the ' young ladies ' cry by her winged words, and how she ' makes herself so familiar with all the visitors that they run away from the house,' especially one whom she described coyly as ' a superior visitor—a gentleman from Northampton,' who appears to have been so alarmed by Harriet's noises after his departure that he returned to look at her with alarm over the window-blind.

I am really sorry for the mistress. She is a pathetic instance of lonely woman in reduced circumstances, still clinging to the pathetic rags of polysyllabic gentility, salts her sentences with ' nevertheless,' shows a patrician contempt for ' no,' and says ' nay ' instead. Her boarding-school smile is a matter for tears. She is very brave, too, for a sempstress's life is a hard one, and she is rudely treated by her employers. That seems to me a tragedy, the struggle for bread of people who have only been brought up on callisthenics and painting on china, and surely they need visiting more than the girls. (1886.)

4

THE Sandown races were the first I had ever seen, and it was like reading six pages of Tolstoi—or rather *vice versa*—though not so exciting. Still it was very wonderful—the rush and the light and the colour of it, the rainbow jockeys

on their glossy-coated steeds straight out of the *Arabian Nights*, pawing, arching their royal necks, flying across the smooth-shaven turf. And the breathless pause before the winner outstrips his comrades! And then the people—so different from one's everyday experience—overstrung old gentlemen with vicious waistcoats; burly old ladies with very golden hair; queer young ladies with hats as high as their manners; octogenarian Adonises with sly, bald faces, who looked as if they had been born and bred in Bond Street at five o'clock of a June afternoon; and hundreds of walking chessboards with voices as loud as their checks and hats on one side (why do horsey people always wear their hats on one side? I can get no one to solve this mystery for me). What a good thing it is for one to see a wholly different side of life from that which one is accustomed to—even if it only teaches one that there are things wholly out of one's own taste and experience, in which people take an absorbing interest. . . . All the same, and priggishness apart, the way races take place (not the races themselves, nor the bare fact of seeing them) is quite out of keeping with Christianity. Straight upon the hideous din of the betting, and the visible fact that thousands are spent on the mere keeping of horses, came poor starving Mrs. Payne's plaintive, 'Yes, Miss, I know the rich 'ave their troubles—they trouble about the poor'; and one knew that the turning of the Temple into a den of thieves was by no means a story of the past alone. (1886.)

5

TO-DAY was the last and the least good day of the Eisteddfod. It has been very fine—a glorious performance of the *Elijah*, and a Bach Chorus which was sublime. The Gladstone day was unparalleled; they took £1100 that one day instead of the usual £300. As he was going into the Pavilion a poor old woman threw a parcel at him, which he caught

anxiously, not seeing the donor and imagining it was some missive of importance. On opening it he found that it was a red handkerchief for him to tie round his head in case of a draught; the ardent old dame thought this the most acceptable guise in which to express her Liberalism.

My general idea of the Eisteddfod to-day, when we got inside the tent, was that of a large show of old men: every kind of old man in Wales—lean old men with coal-black eyes, fat old men with crumpled cuffs, middling old men with insignificant gestures, poetical old men with half-open mouths, discreet old men with tight-shut lips, business-like old men, polite old men and rude old men. They were all herded on a rough wooden platform with a background of red cloth.

I subsequently discovered that they were all 'Bards.' Every Bard is apparently subject to two conditions: he must abjure soap eternally, and light an undying fire in his black, black eye.

The central figure to-day was a hugely stout gentleman with a Beethovenish head, long grey hair anointed with priestly oil which ran over to his coat in the absence of a beard, on to which, scripturally speaking, it ought to have fallen. He had an air of cheap but ineffable Mystery about him, and of a secret in his Eye (which *can* only be spelt with a capital to give the faintest idea of its power). His *nom de plume* was Huffa Mone (which his real name was Williams, but every Bard has a *nom de plume*), and he was the Chief Bard of Anglesea.

There was also present the oldest Bard on record, with a snow-white beard ten miles long like a nursery-rhyme, who made a speech (also ten miles long) in a weak pipey inaudible voice, and who was deafeningly applauded for his age and for his inaudible words. Both he and the Bard of Anglesea presented broad coat-fronts smothered in old Eisteddfod medals and blue ribbons,

The Bards were complimented by a good many dusky prelates—the Revd. LLBGWST-Hueffdw, Canon Plllmn Teddy, and others of like names. They were all cracking wonderful consonantine jokes and guttural quips with the Bards. A few Shropshire curates in low hats represented England in the audience.

Roughly speaking, the Eisteddfod seemed to me to consist in a succession of things like this :—as I said, to begin with, an Old Man Show—swarms of hale old gentlemen clinging together : deafening applause from the audience : the smallest old gentleman leaps up without any warning, roars out a dozen consonants in a gigantic voice, and throws himself passionately on the neck of the largest old gentleman : they embrace : they weep : the Welsh prelates snort and sniffle some gutturals : the old men bow proudly to the audience : the audience rises and screams : the old gentlemen retire arm-in-arm blinded with tears ; and a brass-band strikes up a tune quite enough to finish them off in their infirm and highly nervous condition. Then a nimble gentleman leaps down from the platform, seizes a coy lady from the audience, leads her on to the platform, drags the two old men back from their retirement, and lays their hands on her kid glove ; they kneel ; other old gentlemen stand round her, like post-Raphaelite angels, with their coat-tails for wings outspread ; she wags her purple bonnet over the kneeling ones ; a cheap brass-trumpet is blown over both, and she alternately crowns their heads and pins green favours in their button-holes. Then you find that there have been competitions and that these prone octogenarians are the winners, the *preux chevaliers* of this Land of Frumps. The provincial Rowenas and Clotildas in slate-coloured flounces, from whom they receive their guerdon, approach this greatest occasion in their lives as a High and Holy Festival. The trumpet is supposed to increase the impression of a joust,

Oh what *would* you have said if you had seen me on my bench suddenly pounced upon, dragged on to the platform on the arm of a Welshman with an order in his button-hole, and led forward before the crowded Hall? If you had beheld me first bowing and smirking and pinning a red, white, and blue rosette on to the coat of a Cymric divine—then clasping his hand and murmuring low intense congratulations in his down-bent ear? (Though why I pinned that favour on or congratulated him, or what I said or what he said, I shall never know till the end of the chapter, and I'm certain he won't either.) I only know that he made a long speech in Welsh at which everybody roared, and that I retired, again on the arm of Citoyen Taffy, and that it was terribly formidable to be watched by an audience of at least a thousand, especially with a disrespectful little sister in fits of laughter just below. (1888.)

6

I HAVE plunged into Borrow—you would adore him. His first picture of the Gipsies in *Lavengro* sticks to one and, like all racy great things, appeals to all ages and tastes. Such a curious combination of magic and reality, dream and adventure! One feels all at the same time like a child and like an old man in reading him. . . . I can't conceive what a spell is in the man, and how it is that he holds you breathless over rat-catching, 'bruisers' and philology. The Romany part and the Thief part and the Tramp part, etc., speak for themselves, and so does the authorship part. He makes the commonplace uncommon and the uncommon commonplace in the most extraordinary way. (1889.)

7

TO-DAY the banks on the Witley Road are glowing with amethystine heather dripping with raindrops; the corn-

fields are turning gold, and shine out in glistening strips as far as one can see amongst the green meadows and patches of purple soil and russet field, so that from the distance the land looks like Dame Earth's regalia, brimming over with jewels and guarded by the opal wings of Seraphim—at any rate that is what the clouds look like to-day—iridescent and watery. Everything is much deeper in colour than when you and I took the walk together which I have just been.

I felt exceedingly contemplative, and thought how the leaves and the fields had changed and how nothing *can* remain the same by an immovable law, and remembered Browning's

Nothing can be as it has been before ;
 Better, so call it, only not the same.
 To draw one beauty into our heart's core,
 And keep it changeless ! such our claim ;
 So answered,—Never more !

And I thought, too, how the comfort and strength, as well as the sorrow of life, lies in this, and how thanks are most of all due to God for such a law, which may make one year full of grief and labour but the next full of soothing and rest ; which creates our very weakness that it may grow into strength ; which changes our relations and positions in life, that our souls and sympathies may widen and that we may not stick always in the same form in the Big School ; which takes away the crushingness of grief and the soreness, and makes it the holiest place in life ; which takes away pure lives that they may remain more steadfastly, and that love may grow the stronger for their absence. . . . I think one grasps more and more that it is the sweetness of a life which lives on and is strong, and has power over others.

George Sand's sunset certainly borders on sunrise, and, as she grows old, her judgement gains more of the Prome-

thean fire. She and Mrs. Kemble surely have the same *flaming* judgement? It seems as if by strength of passion for life (no longer for living) and its problems she pierced through them and saw beyond the veil, because she could use both heart and head and therefore had Fire, which is both light and warmth.

And as old Age, in which the passion of love, as it is usually understood, has no place, gradually came upon her, it seems as if she were left to us in all the dignity of her one pure passion, glorious in tenderness, her heart purified and facing the truth. . . . I suppose people are never truly adorable till they are patient, and they are never truly patient till they are old, great and generous. (1889.)

8

SUCH an Easter—the whole earth rising again into a miracle of hope and the promise of fuller life to come!

A sweet little Service, with the usual Easter combined smell of primroses, mackintosh and school-children (which I heard defined lately as ‘*l’odeur du bon Chrétien*’), and the sea outside to lead the choir. One is filled with ardour here by the great Easter-tide going on *outside* the four Church walls, with the pulpit where a joyless Curate prates of Easter Joy with limpest lips; the Easter of Nature and the truth behind it all—the ‘*Sterben und Werden*’ which is the law of all being, human as well as that of woods and meadows; the unceasing Resurrection of the Dead that goes on in the midst of life.

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,

seems the best Easter text. . . . The most blessed thing in it all seems to me that, in spite of outward circumstances and personal ills and aches, something mysterious keeps

on growing inside one which makes more and more for happiness. Even though one loses grasp of it for a time, one gains a more sustained belief in the morning, and a hope which may not be so impetuous as at the spring of life, but will endure more surely since it has faced experience. It is curious how Faith grows unseen and by no observable process—certainly by no actual reasonings (often in spite of them)—but by living and feeling and, above all, by waiting in silence. It sometimes seems as if waiting perfectly were the real science of life, and patience the highest secret of the soul, and that if we do not interrupt God's order by irreverent fretful impatience we shall perhaps 'see partly,' and find and fulfil the true meaning of our lives, instead of forestalling it wrongly and turning ourselves into futilities.

I have a fancy for reading George Sand just now (this time last year I was deep in Vol. iv. of *l'Histoire de ma Vie*) and find her as bracing as ever. She writes to Prince Napoléon : 'Soyez donc heureux puisque le bonheur est une conquête.—Les jours de dégoût et de la fatigue reviennent, le bonheur à l'état de réalité complète n'est pas une chose permanente, mais la morale est qu'il faut combattre toujours pour augmenter votre trésor de force et de foi.' Is not that a Baptism of fire? I came upon it just after I had been writing that rignarole last night, which was curious. (1889.)

9

Lucca, *Easter Sunday.*

I HAVE been thinking of you so much ever since I touched the soil and consommés of France; and at Nervi, which reminded me so much of Cannes, it was all I could do to refrain from running upstairs to fetch you for a walk. And now here we are in this most mediaeval of all places—ducal palaces, mullioned windows, Lombard churches,

Basilican churches, open shops and narrow winding streets whose houses nearly meet—all set in a framework of old red walls and violet hills, fold upon fold. So mediaeval is it that yesterday evening, in our first walk to the Duomo, when the city was wrapped in mysterious twilight, not only did we see an old couple in deep mourning kneeling in fervent prayer on the stone *outside* the Cathedral door (I am almost sure they were murderers in mourning for the murdered), but also we actually beheld a gleamingly handsome Italian in a dissembling cloak climb up to a mullioned window, look in passionately, and descend. We imagined he was looking to see whether his love was alone, but it is probable he was only spying whether there was veal or beef for dinner: the Italian's look for love and veal, I have long since discovered, is one and the same. But this is a digression, and the fact is I don't feel I can describe the indescribable: the only adequate thing to do would be to send you one of the enchanting glimpses we get at every turn through a crumbling archway—a glimpse of garden and russet wall—of a mist of pink peach-blossom, bare fig-trees, and the glossy leaves and pale fruit of the lemon-groves. Or I should like to forward you a whole long narrow street of girls and women in scarlet and gold and faded green, with bright kerchiefs on their heads, as they walk along, dragging rainbow babies by the hand, or stand in groups round the splashing fountains gossiping, their copper jugs in their hands.

As for the Campo Santo, I will not bore you with its wonders or the sculpture of Nicolo Pisano, all of which doubtless you know. Pisa impressed me sadly as a town. It seemed a dead city, with this one live secret of Art throbbing deep in its soul, like a faded woman who has once been beautiful, now only kept alive by a passionate hidden thought. I am writing utter nonsense, but the combination of cathedrals and risotto makes me high-flown. (1891.)

10

ROME.

Oh, it is difficult to write here ! When one isn't possessed one is resting, and when one isn't resting one is thinking, and when one isn't thinking one is sleeping.

What a region it is—this Caesar-world, one with this Nature-world, and then this Art-world ! I feel as if I had been confirmed by Apollo on the steps of the world—There !

You can't imagine the ineffable beauty of the Caesars' Palace, and its ineffable pathos—the blackbirds singing their hearts out in the empty halls carpeted with young grass !

I can't write about the statues ; of the immortal white world in the Vatican and the Capitol I shall love to tell you. You can't think how Cory-like the room of Philosophers' Busts made me feel. It was like shaking hands—no, not hands but *souls*, with them. . . . I *am* happy, and getting quite well. (1891.)

11

ROME.

You certainly ought to be here in this place without a beginning or an end, without anything but a silent, speaking eternity, peopled by still white citizens, instinct with an inexpressible kind of life beyond life—the ineffable enchantment of marble. It is the world of sculpture here which seizes me most, I think—always excepting the world of nature ; but that belongs to the city and includes it, as one includes a person's atmosphere in speaking of his existence.

Every Titan wall of russet-brown is seen through a mist of pink peach-blossom ; every jagged archway is a frame for violet hills and Judas-trees in ardent full blossom ; the sheep-skinned shepherd-boys drive their flocks that wander

in and out between the broken columns and grass-grown tombs on the Appian Way, nibbling the violets without any respect of persons. To a sheep the dust of a Mr. Jones is the same as that of Cæcilia Metella. And so to me the mighty walls and sculptured arches and the giant battle-field of a Forum are part and parcel of the nature of Rome and of her very essence—if you come to ask me about them from their *historical* side I should say it is the *Art* world which possesses me most here.

You ask me for one description of a statue, but, as I can't put them into prose, I will send you the one I have put into verse. Ilaria Caretta, in the Cathedral at Lucca, is like a Browning poem cut in white marble—a very young woman, heavenly lovely and serene in the sleep of death—all rest and no pain.

Death and the Sculptor both a lady loved :
 Death and the Sculptor wrestled hand to hand :
 The Sculptor conquered Death, as it behoved,
 Since Art holds Life and Death at her command.
 Death took the lady, but the Sculptor kept
 The beauty and the blossom of her youth,
 And gave her back to men as if she slept,
 A marble mystery of peace and truth.
 Thou still white woman, sleeping evermore,
 Eternity of silence and of grace !
 Time spell-bound stands afar, and we before
 Such rest would kneel as in a holy place,
 Thankful thy sleep can never finish, or
 Life bring a shadow to that perfect face.

(1891.)

SINCE Rome I seem to have lived a lifetime of beauty—of lights and shadows, of golden suns and white moons turning the olive-trees to silver as they bend and sway to each other, half angelic and half courtly, for all the world like Perugia's Seraphs. The sight I almost like the best is that of the

Madonna-faced women here, gay-skirted, with figures of such gracious curves, who watch their flocks in the fields and work the while at their distaffs (real old fairy-tale distaffs), or stand up to their waists in the bright green barley, or walk in company of their fierce, sunny husbands behind the carts drawn by great white oxen, born for mythological characters to sit on.

One of the things I enjoyed most was going to Assisi and moving about where St. Francis actually did tread. What those Churches of Assisi are you can't think. You seem to have entered a solemn rainbow, and then discover that every crannied wall, arch, apse, roof is smothered in frescoes, three-quarters of them Giotto at his very best. I can only say that it is more like Dante in colour than anything else : the same dewy childhood of mind, the same manly power—almost grim,—the same godly courage, the same severity of judgement and sober truth,—not quite the same might of horror.

St. Francis wedding Poverty is perhaps the most wonderful—the bride is so grim, and yet so pure that she becomes beautiful, with a purely spiritual beauty. Her face and figure are quite white ; the bridegroom's clothes are grey-black ; and all about them is the crowd of citizens and nobles, in their coifs and birettas and Chaucer head-dresses, whom Browning alone knew intimately. In one corner, robed in lilac-grey, is a figure like Dante, beautiful, uncompromising and full of religion.

One does so strongly realise here, in the fiery Baptisms of Art one is having, that religion is born *only* of simplicity and depends on it, and that, whatever these people believed, they were bound to be religious because they were as simple as babes. I feel that Giotto is the one who, above all, through his mastery managed to convey soul as foremost, together with beauty of body and without any rudeness. Cimabue, and the early masters here at Siena, are sublime

in their pathos, because they have no body or (at best in a Cimabue) a body of glorious rudeness, and so they express nothing but soul piercing through the crude lines. But it seems to me infinitely greater to possess the power of beauty and yet to make soul the foremost impression. And, to my ignorant mind, that is Giotto's crown of masterdom. Giotto must have believed ardently in dogma as well as spirit, and that dogma in painting is a divine sensation. One can only return to 'just like Dante.'

13

RENAN is at present *employing*—I can't say absorbing—my mind. After reading Martineau it is like chewing rose-leaves when one has been eating daily bread, however heavily baked. I like his history, but his *jol*e and *charme* bother me, and there is—from whatever point of view Christ be taken—a kind of golden blasphemy about his yachting parties on the Lake of Galilee and '*courses*' among the mountains. He cooks French dishes out of divine truths, and makes the disciples on their apostolic mission into a species of French excursionist!

But he gives one infinite amusement and much interest, so one ought not to grumble,—only I wish he didn't unsimplify and un-sublimify things so much. (1891.)

14

I AM truly thankful to have seen Mrs. Colman.¹ One certainly can say of her that 'Life is perfected in Death,' though one would rather say something simpler. Speculation seems more than ever vain after a sight like that of her faith and suffering, and the only solution we can seek about final things is to be found in humble life, in action and endurance, far from the tangle of words. After all

¹ [A poor woman dying in Whitechapel.]

it is the pure in heart, not the talkers, who see God. And how strange it is that the same bodily suffering should destroy faith in some and confirm it in others! Behold, these things are a mystery. (1892.)

15

[*Tennyson's Funeral*]

I HAVE just returned from the Abbey, and I am sure you would have felt with me that it bore a wonderful impression of that kingly personality—of his state and his simplicity. Every inch of standing-room was thronged by 11.30, and every place seemed full of a noble sorrow. The Gordon boys were outside and presented arms when the coffin arrived, covered by the Union Jack and having only laurel wreaths down its centre. . . . Poet's Corner was flooded with sunshine. When the procession moved there from the Altar-steps, all the poets seemed to be waiting for their mighty brother and to be stretching white arms of welcome to him. . . . And they and he seemed so much more alive than most of the people around that one could only reverse the usual words and say, 'In the midst of Death we are in Life.' (*October 12, 1892.*)

16

THERE is some support, not consolation—is there not?—in the thought that the real things of life are sacred and one with death and all that is beyond; that, in feeling for them, we are one with that which God has taken to himself. . . . Theo's swift, tender insight, her fantastic grace, her distinction of soul, her genius for companionship, and her dainty mirth have put a fragrance into my life which will always make the world a sweeter place for me. . . . One knows, in thinking of her, why the world has lived on the faith that God was made a little child. . . . For any one

who has known her there is no need to quarrel about creeds. . . . Genius for life such as hers must include the life beyond, beside every form of life here from highest to lowest. (1896.)

17

[After visiting a dying woman in Whitechapel, a *protégée* for sixteen years.]

It was all profoundly moving and heartrending. The doctor had given her up, and she seemed to be dying, and had that look of dignity and beauty which Death gives alike to kings and beggars. The strangely faithful love—so undeserved and so bountifully given—of a simple untrained heart like hers humbles and blesses one. (1898.)

18

My Lafayette experience has been wonderful in charm if not in bulk. I started early from Fontainebleau, got out at Montgéron, and of course found the distance more like five than two kilometres. I first travelled in a sort of coach to the dear, drowsy village of Yères, which might be buried ten fathoms deep in the Provinces instead of being near Paris. The road to it runs by the silver river Yères, a tributary of the Seine, bordered by pollarded willows. In the heart of the slumbrous little place is an ancient feudal tower with turrets, and opposite to it a Renaissance fountain. The tower, I find, is all that remains of a castle, of which it formed the gateway and which belonged to Charles VIII.'s secretary; the fountain was formerly in the garden. The whole village became so much excited by my arrival and the fact that there was nothing for me to eat within a radius of some miles, that it seemed likely an *émeute* would ensue. At last, as I was still wandering about in search of food, two opulent old gentlemen in

straw hats (a kind of French Brothers Cheeryble) peered over their villa-wall and directed me to a funny little pot-house, where two Jacques-Bonshommes from the fields were munching, and there I found bread and cream-cheese. I hired the only carriage and drove about a mile, with beating heart, down the stately sycamore avenue of La Grange, on either side the whitening wheat-fields which Lafayette was so sanguine about ninety years ago.

The château is beautiful and wonderfully impressive; red-brick faced with white; built in Henry iv.'s time, and surrounded by a deep moat; with endless broad grassy avenues on either side, like those at St. Cloud, and breezy meadows with elms beyond them. It belonged at one time to the murdered Guise's widow, then to Louis XIII. It is now let to a tenant—no descendant of Lafayette—who has been there for twenty-five years. All approach is forbidden, entrance inside impossible, and I had to bribe the lady of the Bakery to allow me to go, accompanied by her, round to the other side of the house; and there I sought and found Fox's ivy-tree.¹ No one knows anything about it. It is the only one on the house. I was separated from it by the moat, so I had to pick some leaves growing near the bridge—one for you and one for me. I came away, still more I stood there, with tears in my heart if not in my eyes, and felt the spirit-touch of the noble souls that haunt that avenue and hover over those sun-tanned walls. The air was full of the scent of limes, and the shifting clouds and lights and shadows seemed all one with the house and its history.² (1897.)

¹ [Fox and his wife stayed for some time with the Lafayettes in 1802, and he planted against the house an ivy-tree, which had overrun its walls before Lafayette died in 1834.—*The Household of the Lafayettes*, p. 304.]

² [La Grange in later years was inhabited, and is so still, by the Marquis de Lasteyrie, great-grandson to Lafayette. Edith Sichel met the Marquis and Marquise in London, was much gratified by their appreciation of her book, and paid a delightful visit to them at the château.]

19

THE most formidable person in Paris is the old waiter who guards the Eden of the Café Foyot with his violent whiskers, for all the world like a fierce old prawn. I am sure that he was born at the bottom of a Foyot sauce-pan in an ocean of Bouillabaisse and had a prawn for his Papa. However, the savants and charming French literary world still gather comfortably together and dine beneath his awful aegis. I seem to have dwelt rather disproportionately on him; but he represents one whole side of Paris, the Olympian, matter-of-fact side that makes them take food so seriously and evoke so much from material life. (1898.)

20

TOURS.

WE began with Matthew Arnold's Church at Brou, the most moving and lovely rendering of love in marble that ever I beheld. Margaret of Parma herself is masculine, regal, almost stern, excepting for her long rippling hair, but her husband was not called Philibert le Beau for nothing. He lies with his beautiful face turned tenderly towards his mother, a lovely marble woman sleeping amongst sculptured Saints a few yards behind him. His figure is surrounded by stately child-angels, one holding his helmet, another his gauntlet, the four others only looking at him—not sad, only contemplative. Margaret's Oratory, where she came every day to pray after she had built the Church, is now behind his tomb. It touched me doubly because it had a fireplace, which gave it the feeling of a home; one felt that she *lived* there. The Church used to stand in the midst of a wood, but now the forest has receded.

The whole thing brought before one the immensity and endurance of love and the presence of death in so intense a way that poetry would have been the only relief. The thought was almost a weight of beauty and melancholy.

HOTEL DE L'UNIVERS,
; TOURS, June 1898.

TAKE care of this crumpled leaf—for where do you think it comes from? From the garden of Nohant—from George Sand's own shady path. Suddenly, at the junction of Moulins, Emily and I discovered that we could arrive in a few hours at La Châtre if we deserted our luggage, which we knew to be safe, and arrived with the bag that we had in the railway-carriage. After lunching at a dear small Bourbonnais village called Bessay we caught our train and duly arrived. I can never describe to you the romance of that twilight journey through Berri, with the Indre winding like a silver scroll, and the poplars bordering its banks, and the elder-scent almost heavy on the evening breeze. Then the rapturous, if flea-bitten, night at the pot-house of the little town of La Châtre, wiled away by Berrichon songs and brawls in the *Cabaret* two yards off; then morning chicory and water, and 8 o'clock start for Nohant. Our host was the intimate friend of George Sand, a Berrichon like a foaming bottle of French wine, who called us 'mes enfants'; and he drove us in the same *Américaine* in which he had driven her constantly to and from Nohant. An *Américaine*, let me tell you, is a kind of run-to-seed buggy with the front of a cart and the other half a landau. It took us at a trot through page after page of her books; past wide and gentlesweeps of country—generous uplands and rich meadows—with the charming Indre at every turn, fragrant hedgerows, grey-green oat-fields thronged with poppies and cornflowers—whilst *gardeuses de troupeaux*, knitting as they walked after their flocks or sate beneath clumps of elder, met the eye constantly, their hair covered by the square white *bonnet* she so often describes. Sometimes it was a cartful of laughing Berrichons who crossed our road, their sunny

faces full of traditions and honesty and shrewdness. Everybody who spoke to us of George Sand talked as if she had died yesterday. Our driver said he used to see her almost daily in the lanes. 'Elle marchait à travers les champs—toujours comme ça' (wide gesture of the arms), in her man's clothes unless she was on the high-road, 'et toujours, toujours une cigarette à la bouche.' He and his wife had been real comrades of hers. 'Elle venait chez nous pour tout; elle menait un grand train, souvent 25 pour le dîner. "Avez-vous des écrevisses pour moi aujourd'hui, mes amis?" elle demandait, et elle prenait ce qu'elle voulait.' The wife dwelt most on the 'grand train' of her existence, but the man had accepted her personality and her genius, if not as God made them, at any rate as a production peculiar to Berri in which he had a share. What was striking was that everybody spoke of her as one of them, greater than they but quite as much a Berrichon as a celebrity, and as giving much employment to all the country-side. 'Ah, elle faisait du bien, celle-là, il y avait toujours des gens qui allaient et venaient de Paris.' Our host had driven Alexandre Dumas Fils, Théophile Gautier (je l'ai connu bien, celui-là), Victor Hugo, another whose name ended in *o*—he could get no nearer than that—et tout ça. He showed us the actual Mill of Angibeau, as white as the Berri cows which pasture everywhere; and then came the vine-covered *Cabaret* where she took her 8 A.M. glass of wine, during her morning stroll.

Nohant itself is all that one has fancied, and much more lovable than imagination could make it—a long low rambling white house with a grey slate roof and a comfortable rather ramshackle (or rather ungirt) look. The garden is a delightful mixture of *potager* and wood, with one long path untidily edged by roses, pinks, columbines and sweet-briar, at the end of which are two small rustic benches without backs and opposite each other, embodying in their

every inch untold hours of absorbing topics, and evidently expressly intended for G. S. and (let us say) Flaubert. Near this comes a large yard and then a charming broad grassy plot, studded by huge elms. Here she used to make the village lads and lasses dance to the *cornemuse*. It is surrounded on three sides by tumbledown farm-buildings. Behind the flower-walk is the little family burial-ground. Her tomb has a simple slab with 'Georges Sand'—nothing more—written on it; the 8th of June had been her birthday, and the slab was piled high with wreaths. The graves of Maurice and two grandchildren are there too. Maurice's widow and her two daughters, Aurore and Lucie, live there, but are absent just now. Aurore is artistic, and is said to look like her grandmother.

One of the most vivid things was the village *Cabaret* where George Sand used to go every night with her comrades, and for which she had painted a sign-board (very badly); a house with 'Si nous allions boire une bouteille' written underneath. It is kept by an old crone who had been her waiting-maid for years and had served at table. 'Ah, *je l'aimais*,' she said, 'elle était bonne envers tous . . . non, non, elle n'était pas coquette, pas du tout; elle se coiffait tout simplement en bandeaux comme mes sœurs, j'en avais seize, moi (here followed spasmodic photographs of sisters in groups). Seulement quand le Prince Napoléon ou peut-être M. Dumas venait, elle mettait une belle robe et se coiffait très-bien.' The gardener, who had been her farm-man, showed us a little old summer-house where she sometimes sat up all night writing, and told us that she had 'toujours été bonne et juste envers ses gens, quoiqu'elle avait l'abord un peu rude.'

I must cease these emotions, and wish I had left room to describe our lovely Châteaux—Chinon, Azay-le-rideau, Ussé, Langeais, or the Library of Tours where I read to-day, or the Cathedral.

22

WE have been choosing a hedge to protect our border. I wish you knew the charming nursery-gardener we deal with, a regular Surrey pippin, always emitting unconscious proverbs, who speaks of his plants as 'he' or 'she.' Yesterday he showed us a weeping beech. 'You wouldn't believe it,' he said, 'wot that tree was; he would *not* do nohow; we tried him flat, we tried him upright; then sudden we put him on a stand and tried him as a weeper, and he's done beautiful.' Isn't this like a certain sort of human being? I can count the ones who can't lie flat or stand upright, but *do beautiful* as weepers. (1898.)

23

IN the National Gallery I chiefly gave myself up to Piero della Francesca. How subtle and how naïf he is, both at once! He seems to foreshadow the moderns in his love of the *queer* type, and in seeing what he painted in a way that belongs to a special attitude of mind. What an appealing attitude! And what a world of difference between him and them! *He* gives us beauty, and his love of the strange comes from fresh morning senses, not from restless and sated ones.

Certainly the outburst of the Italian painters has no counterpart for *simultaneousness* except in our Elizabethan outburst. Both keep the same glorious level for their second-rates. So many could paint one picture or one figure in a picture, could write one poem or play or one passage in it, that belong to the best, if they could not keep up their highest level for long. Sustained fertility at the highest level must be the mark of the Titans alone, and even they have their more or less. (1898.)

24

THE sweet little class has just departed. B. arrived, very alert historically and covered with aspinall physically, as she had been blacking soldiers. H. and G. discussed Drake's morals deliciously, and appealed to B. as umpire; she was modest but decided in Drake's favour. C. only answers questions connected with the Magellan Straits. The class might really have been defined to-day as a game of Ducks and Drake. (1899.)

25

I HAVE been finishing my book [*Women and Men of the French Renaissance*], and I blush to think how much it means to me. I shall indeed feel rewarded if you find an improvement. The older one grows the more one finds the great secret in art and in life is the same one—to forget self, or rather lose yourself that you may find yourself. And the work of the mediocre with the wish to write—like myself—is to sacrifice anything and everything to the subject in hand.

The Rabelais chapter was a joy to work at, and I enjoyed Ronsard and Du Bellay. (1900.)

26

I HAVE just been wandering in exquisite Corot and Diaz woods and meadows and along the banks of a perfect Daubigny river—a land which is, alas, to vanish this week. Mary actually consented to come with me, and what I am fullest of is the new Piero di Cosimo which we saw first in Ryder Street, the battle of the Centaurs—very exciting, full of fantastic beauty and fantastic ugliness and intellectual wine—altogether the quintessence of the Renaissance spirit. We looked at it for half an hour to the tune of Roger Fry's charming and humorous comments.

The *Robe Rouge* was very enjoyable last night—a fine literary satire by Brioux on the administration of Law in France. Réjane's acting was very fine, though perhaps a shade too violent, as the peasant woman ruined by Justice. . . . How is it that French actors can put worldly success or failure into their very beards and whiskers—simply through some actor's mastery of expression? The whiskers of the magistrate who *cannot* rise because he is honest were a study of dejection. (1902.)

27

I HAVE been enormously uplifted by reading the Life of Pasteur . . . the most Christ-like life it has been my fortune to meet. His endless, victorious struggle with suffering and disease for Humanity's sake, his simple patience and infinite compassion, his intense faith in God and the Life Eternal, make it a holy book and a much richer one than the lives of other men of science.

Nothing helps sorrow—does it?—like goodness and your ¹ healing Nature; words, even words of prayer, are bound to ring thin at moments, often for much longer . . . and how well do I realise that sense of futility which comes and overwhelms you. But the life of Love and the Permanence of Love are always there, often powerless to the eye, never really so, and ever surrounding even the poor body with kingly dignity. (1902.)

28

THE two things that strike me most about people just now are their incapability of changing and their faculty for *surprise* at nothing at all, at utterly unimportant coincidences, while they are quite unaffected by the really surprising things of life—the sky and the trees and our own stolidity, and the extraordinary temperings of the wind to

¹ [The letter was written to Mary Coleridge.]

the shorn lambs, and the marvellous way in which one year is made utterly different to another—and the patience of God and the presumption of us mannikins. And this disproportionate surprise is offensive because it is a sort of vulgar relation to Awe and Reverence, keeping some sort of outward resemblance to them but losing all their soul and dignity. (1902.)

29

ROME.

It was beautiful on Christmas Eve to drive along the Appian Way, by crumbling walls of giant girth, sad tombs standing out against the silver sky in the silver and brown ocean of the Campagna, with all the mystery of Rome pressing on one's soul, yet enchanting it. There we met a Cardinal in scarlet stockings hobnobbing with his coachman, and that is the most Christian sight we have seen. . . . I can pray better in the Coliseum than in St. Peter's unless I am just under Michael Angelo's Pietà. But what was really sweet was hearing the children 'preach,' one after the other, on their traditional wooden rostrum at Ara Coeli—tiny curates of four and five, briskly reciting their hymns to the Manger; and getting nervous; and smiling and shaking their heads; and being lifted from the pulpit by their waiting congregation of parents—such dear shepherds and Madonnas and St. Elizabeths from the Campagna, all so devout and at home in their vast candle-lit temples. God bless you all in 1904. (1903.)

30

DRESDEN.

I HAVE been to the *Meistersinger* with Scheidemantel singing. I have sate in the 1.50 Mark gallery next a fat lady in a plaid-silk blouse, who perpetually said 'Ach Gott, es zieht,' and rushed out to shut all the doors of that suffocating but

happy place. I have adored the pictures ; I have bought toys and Wunder-Knauel from a woman like a lighted Christmas-tree ; I have bought cakes for three pence from a woman like a delicious bun ; I have become so absorbed in contemplating a drab-flannel jacket with a saque, marked 'Höchst Modern,' that I was nearly run over by a Stadts-Tram—I have in short led the Dresden life. One of the things that has fascinated me most is that magic collection of Chinese China—its heart-searching colours, and fairy-like charm, and Great-Mogul vases, dead-blue and lilac and gold. Those jars look for all the world like wicked potentates condemned to stand on shelves, transformed—superb and impotent.

The latest *chic* among the Dresden ladies is to dress like travelling-bags neatly trimmed with straps. I actually saw one in a dark green Russia-leather collar and revers. The waiters, in face and manner, have been influenced by China of a bad period, and mince and flourish like commercial little shepherds. This hotel is in the pocket of the Opera and of the Picture Gallery, and looks upon the river with its evening stream of lights, like an urban heaven of sweet sophisticated stars.

Prague was grim and fascinating—like a wild and fascinating person with a secret grudge. One wants to leave it at once, and yet it haunts one. I felt this especially in the Jewish Cemetery—the oldest, proudest and most desolate place I have seen. It gave me a strange feeling to stand at the tombstone of our tribe, 900 A.D., and see its symbol (each headstone has the name in a picture, the name never written) ; in our case (the tribe of Levi) a tall jug—which it pleased me to fancy was for ever full. The sign of those learned in the Talmud is a bunch of grapes. The oldest scholar's grave is 600 A.D., and heaven knows how many great old Rabbis lie there, memorable and forgotten, below their stone clusters of fruits. The sign of Aaron's tribe is

two hands, and Mr. Hahn lies interred beneath a crowing cock.

And the wind and the rain were sobbing all round the place, and all the melancholy of my race seemed to rise up and answer them. (1905.)

31

PADUA.

WE are just back from a divine day at Castelfranco. Giorgione's picture glowed in the mellow light, the St. George and his armour so vital with beauty that he made everything *out of the picture* seem mere shadow. The Madonna on her throne is so beautiful that the restoration doesn't seem to matter so much as I dreaded, and the whole is such a heaven of tone and harmony as one could never realise from any description. Then we had coffee in the sun-flooded street, opposite the great red-brick city-wall, with a tide of burning creeper flowing over it; and so back through the little tiny New Jerusalem, with the sunset over the Alps and over the grape-hung festoons that link the mulberry-trees together, while here and there were groups of graceful peasants garnering in their vintage.

To-morrow we go for the day to Vicenza and pursue Montagna, that most fascinating painter, in his own Palladian city.

Padua is entirely sympathetic. Every stone seem sim-printed with learning, the glorious early-morning learning of the first Renaissance, when every scholar came here to learn with all the force of maturity and the passionate curiosity of youth. There on their tombs they still look forth from sunny cloisters and shady churches, sculptured at their desks or in their pulpits with square caps and University robes. (1906.)

32

MANTUA.

A LUCKY star guided us at Mantua, for directly we arrived we sailed out into the great mere that surrounds it, and into depths of sunset amid fantastic armies of bulrushes and fleets of water-lily leaves—rose-fire above and below us, every spike and blade reflected also, and behind us the city wrapped in deep blue mist : then the sharp crescent of the moon above and below, and the evening star like a spiral flame (by some secret of refraction), and so back by moonlight—a most weird enchanted impression. We seemed to have seen the ghost of the city of Mantua before we saw its dead and cold body. (1906.)

33

I HAVE finished the appetising Fénelon. What a Frenchman he is—the very root of all the spiritual *chic* in the R. C. Church which some find so alluring ! Yet his central doctrine that love is all—that it is not the path we tread that matters, but the foot that treads it—is beautiful, wise and consoling. All the same, the path that he trod was a little slippery sometimes. He had, I think, *in petto* both Montaigne (as to sense and wit, but the wit is sharper than in Montaigne) and St. François de Sales, but no Pascal. What do you think of his ‘ Our days are short, but our hours are long ’ ? A profound saying, I think. (1907.)

34

LIFE certainly does *seem* the most hateful of things ; but *au fond* it isn't. It will always be lovable because of love, will it not ? And, after all, duty is only love hardened and extended beyond the personal sphere. I suppose we don't easily grasp, in earlier life at least, that love is a hard

discipline—both love of God and love of man, and that it leads us into dark places while it glorifies them. It certainly makes us stick to our post.

Sometimes it seems to me as if life and this planet meant a long duel between God and Nature ; as if hitherto omnipotence had been incompatible with all-goodness, and God has renounced Power in order to be Goodness itself ; as if omnipotence and goodness could only be one when man himself had grown perfect and stood on the confines of infinity—and then Nature would be conquered by God, and happiness would begin ; so that perhaps we are building up God's omnipotence by our bitter combat. Man, at all events, seems to go through some such struggle, and for ever provides the field on which Nature and the Spirit fight for victory. And each advance that he makes is a fresh victory over matter, so that perhaps, in the most mysterious trials of all and the dustiest, the spirit is going strongest by the very awfulness of the wrestling. Anyhow, or so it seems to me, we must stick by our own *spirits* in the conflict.

Forgive this rhodomontade. When one tries to express definitely what one means, which is inexpressible, one always ends by writing apparent nonsense. (1908.)

35

At St. Thomas's I found ——— the Brave, walking on two arms, shawl-less, across the yard to the Hospital, like a Vi-Queen, after an operation. The Hospital (not the Nursing Home) Christmas was one of the most beautiful *sights* aesthetically as well as spiritually that I have ever seen. The Babies' Ward made me feel choky. In the middle was an immense Tree of the Knowledge of Sweetness and Light, and the highly-polished floor reflected the lights as if it were water. And in the midst of these opal

pools of light sate bunches of babies in spotless white shawls, like clustered Bambini-angels, all round little low tea-tables, each presided over by an older baby pouring out tea. Round the room were the beds, full of prostrate cherubs, too ill to get up; before them trays *laden* with presents; and here and there the house-surgeons in white linen coats, beaming and ministering, did not look so very unlike the Saints.

Everywhere down the long shadowy corridors—like aisles of some great Church of Humanity—one caught vistas of other Wards, their floors also a mirror of colour and misty brilliance; and outside through the windows across the grey river there moved, as if in space, fresh bunches of luminous grapes, borne apparently by huge chariots which turned out to be Trams or Buses. (1908.)

36

I HAVE no business to have dumps after the Hippocrene elixir of Anatole France last night—wine of the Gods, or rather music. Wit hardly seems the word for the continuous warm tempered *light* which flowed from him—never flashing or spasmodic, but like nature itself.

I agree with every word you say about Anatole France and the metallic quality in him. My mind enjoys his Hippocrene when my soul and heart rebel and hate. But *he* is so much bigger than his books. I went only expecting amusement, and was not prepared for a man who seemed *pushed* by some force outside himself, instead of by talent inside. And he looks like a Don Quixote who cannot be Don Quixote because he cannot take windmills for anything but what they are. His eyes are sad, but he has a smile like winter sunshine over a frosty landscape. And his voice is like a violin. And I am like a fiddle-de-dee. (1912.)

To come back to Law, I agree with every word you say, and you hit upon the passages I love best in the *Liberal and Mystical Writings*.¹ I quite agree with you that these later writings grew out of the earlier ones, and that his capitulation to Boehme was natural growth and not conversion. I suspect the intellectual side of him was too monochrome, too much wanting in imaginative power outside religion, to make him understand the true relation of the mind to God. Nearly all mystics seem to me weak in this, that they exclude the fact that we owe *all* our powers to God—that the holy thing is to turn them towards Him and bathe them in His light, not to get rid of them; and that it is in using them thus that we can make goodness attractive, not by *stripping* our beings. That is only a short cut. Tolstoi makes the same mistake, and it is bound to end in a certain loss of force. As you say, it needs a very holy man to throw away knowledge. Law could do it, but who shall say that Law, whose path was light, would not have shed his light more widely had he given it more channels? It always makes me uneasy when inspiring writers leave out the sense of beauty. But ‘stars are of mighty use,’ and Law is a star. And he has got hold of the great truth that *being* is the main business of life, and that deeds only count when they spring from being. I think I tend to believe that mystics are born mystics: St. Theresa, St. Augustine, that (to me) most tiresome Juliana of Norwich, and St. Catherine of Siena. I don’t count Madame Guyon. She seems to me a kind of manufactured mystic and rather smack-worthy! Of course there must be many who come to the mystic faith after much experience, but don’t you think that the seed was lying passive far down in their

¹ [*Liberal and Mystical Writings of William Law*, ed. Scott Palmer and Du Bose, 1908.]

souls till life brought it forth? If it *is* grown from experience, then it is to be ranked with other structural growths. But if it is really vision—God-given—then there is more in it. Only to me that kind of vision appears to be given to so very few, and then it is a fountain of life, not a rule of conduct. It seems to me, as does all exceptional truth, like Rabelais' wine in the temple of Bacchus, which the priestess gave alike to all seekers of her altar, but which tasted different to the lips of each. . . . What a bore I am.—Forgive me!

Here we are in detestable Switzerland on the way to adorable Italy. I can't bear its ugly beauty. I like ugly ugliness and beautiful ugliness, but not ugly beauty. (1912.)

38

PERUGIA.

I SHOULD like to be able to send you a slice of the celestial Valley of Perugia which I see from my window. To the east Assisi shines like a pearl upon the hill girt with vineyards. The vintage has begun. Piero della Francesca men and women stand like kings and queens upon ladders, and throw down the heavy purple bunches, and little Bacchuses of four with tiny Ariadnes leap about crowned with vine-leaves and shout something very like Io to the jolly lean black pigs which they herd. One's soul becomes one's senses here. It is very agreeable.

One of the most blessed things we did was to drive to the Monte Cavale and sit there. Every inch of mountain-path and brown earth and violet valley we looked at had been trodden by St. Francis's feet, and the air, too, is still alive with tales of his miracles—puerile often, heavenly also; and they and the little cell and the silent rocks are still aggrandised by his faith—a greater miracle than all the miracles. It was a pendant to our day at Port Royal. And what a South Pole to Pascal's North Pole (ice burns,

so the N. P. is all right for Pascal) ! I do so like your calling Pascal a Matterhorn. I wish the light had made him happier. I always feel, but I say it in abject humility, that he made one terrible mistake—he hated evil more than he loved his fellows. And his invention of the Omnibus for the poor, always cited as a proof of his ‘Agape,’ does not mend matters at all. In one way I feel as if he were like Tolstoi ; he vents his repentance for his own sins upon mankind, and lays down methods very suitable to those who have intellectual pride, but not the rest. Yet nothing, nothing, beats the *Pensées*, and I well understand bearing them when one can bear nothing else. If only he and St. Francis could be welded together ! For St. F. leaves out the mind, and probably doesn’t help those whose minds get in the way of their loving their brethren. In the letter that was living in the depths of my trunk when I last wrote, you said so truly that goodness must seem a difficult thing till it is found, and then it would seem the simplest. And that applies to St. Francis, but not to Pascal, who never found goodness simple and never quite found it. St. Francis was certainly a mystic who did apply his mysticism to conduct. I quite agree with what you say of the need of ‘daily bread unity’ as one gets older, and I rather suspect mysticism ought to work as unconsciously as love—as a presence which makes action vital, not as a creed. Isn’t mysticism like wine, only dangerous when we drink it without food ? Every Sacramental thought should be made of bread and wine together. It (mysticism) might easily degenerate into a short cut to goodness, and mistake monotony for unity. . . . I expect that the whole awful secret of life lies in the true placing of being and doing. The average man overrates doing, and the mystics see this and, knowing that being is the main thing, they virtually make it the only one. I do feel as if they had got hold of a truer end of life than the Christian-job end. (1912.)

39

BORGO SAN SEPOLCRO.

You cannot think what a sensation is Monte Casale with its Monastery built on to the little stone hermitage hewn out of the rock, to which St. Francis came after the Stigmata. There you find him on the rude steep little staircase leading up to the stone where he slept, with the great wooden Madonna he brought with him and his rough primitive Crucifix still there. And those big bare mountain-tops, those boulders round which blue butterflies play, the whole landscape austere yet smiling, is so wonderfully like him. Not an inch of ground that he looked upon, either on the heights or in the valley below, that had not been trodden upon by his unwearying feet. Borgo was the last place he stayed at before he returned to die at Assisi.

I saw a large brown butterfly in Franciscan dress embrace a blue thistle. And now we are in divine Perugia, and our walk in the valley yesterday was enough to make one cry for beauty. Why is one so piercingly happy in Italy? One's senses become one's soul, and one's soul one's senses, and the weary old battle between them ceases to be.

I send you three Umbrian Angels to take care of your year. (1912.)

40

BARMOOR CASTLE.

SUCH an exciting arrival at Berwick, still quite light at 9.30, the hills and Abbey-towers silver and grey, and the broad stately river flowing silver under the strong grey spanning bridges—all force and beauty. It is such a congenial town to me, the town of middle-age, brave and strong and come unto itself—grey without gloom, silver-grey indeed with lights of its own, still full of contrasts but without violence, large in its outlook, fortified enough, but not walled,

It looked unearthlily beautiful as I sped through it in the motor, and so did the long Northumberland roads encased in full-blossomed hawthorn all silvery in the twilight ; silver, too, the little fairy rabbits that sate in the wood with the motor-light full on them, and scuttled off like elves of the North to their homes in the down-like fields. Thrilling was the first sight of the sea over which the Danes once came sailing—a grim, dim, resolute sea ; and thrilling the sight of Durham Cathedral from the train, where I dined in the Restaurant off fried leather. At Berwick the motor (conducted by an angel of a chauffeur who will, I hope, drive me on the Last Day) conveyed me to this haven of goodness and pleasure, where I'm being degenerately pampered. (1912.)

41

E. and I have both absorbed with deep interest the Rutherford Paper. He interests me more and more. His mind was so strangely morbid for its vigour—a remarkable vigour. And he is always as sincere as man can be, and never sentimental—another spiritual feat in a man of his introspective faculty. — was describing to me his impression of M. R. It's a curious game to take the two men who have tried to talk quite sincerely in these last twenty years—the one with reverence, the other without—and to reflect that, on the whole, they sum up this generation—Mark Rutherford and Samuel Butler, I mean. — thinks their faces alike. Are they ? They both strip their thought naked ; at least old Butler thought he did, but he often put on petticoats of wit again, without knowing it. But M. R. has suffered so much more in his heart, and S. B. in his vanity, that the analogy has to stop.

Yet S. B. was at something serious even when he most tried to shock—like a Frenchman ; and he had a passion for truth—or perhaps it was a loathing for falsehood, rather

a different thing and less sympathetic? M. R. had the passion for truth.

42

I AM particularly grateful for Mark Rutherford in this Valhalla.¹ All round me are sprawling the inmates—the larvae of living beings—who literally sit all day doing nothing, only stirring their spines when they hear the gong or are told of something to be bought cheaper somewhere than somewhere else. We have been celebrating the Lord's Day by eating more and better than on other days, and I am writing in what I call the Cattery, presided over by two old spinsters (we call them Castor Oil and Pollux) who look as if they were holding Life in their pursed-up mouths and found it nasty, but were too genteel to put it out. Now two French folk, living, I think, in sin for purely business purposes (a hairdresser's firm or the like), are quarrelling about some very concrete point and are alive enough to be refreshing; at any rate they do mind when the pepper-box doesn't pepper. (1913.)

43

It seems to me that Mark Rutherford was so personal a man chiefly from his dependence on human sympathy, and also from the inrootedness of his early soaking in the *personal* religious atmosphere of Evangelicalism; and that he rather confused the issues of the word 'personal' and stuck to our present sense-bound—at any rate limited—definition.

But if we believe anything to *be* beyond us—as I do—we must believe that our perception of the personal will change; that it will be, perhaps, nearer to what we now call the impersonal, though infinitely warmer, and that we shall awake in its likeness, and not miss what we now feel

¹ [A hotel.]

as if we should miss so badly. I wish we had more words. The *essential* seems to me the truly personal, and whatever there is of essence in us is surely *here and now* immortal, much more *then and there* as well as here. (1918.)

44

I FIND Lady Ponsonby, the wise judge, the firm Liberal, more and more delightful. At last one feels she is growing old—she is eighty-two. She is like a fine flame kindled by sea-logs and sandal-wood—good to watch and good to warm the mind at and the heart too.

I have met such a charming Director of 'Le vieux Colombier' Company, who has offered me seats whenever I go to Paris. How pleasant it is to talk fluent and incomprehensible bad French with one who does not frown or move a polite muscle. (March, 1914.)

45

I AM a heretic, you know, and it seems to me that all who call Christ Master with adoration of that life are of the same band, whatever the view taken of the manner in which that life came to us. The spiritual miracle of it was—is—greater than all miracles, as Emily Lawless says so well; and it has never seemed to me that *whence* Christ was should so trouble men, when *what* Christ was is so all-important, so compelling, so life-filling. (June, 1914.)

46

HUMBLY and passionately I dare call him Master. And I can't say more than that. The immanence of God and the life of Christ are my treasures. They warm existence and help one's worst hours. Buddha, Socrates, Mahomet, all the long chain of revelations of God so dear to the Broad

Church (and rightly), do rank for me in a long chain of evolution, but they seem the more to show how much greater, warmer, more mysterious, more near to God Christ was. They never make one glow. (July, 1914.)

47

[The following short extracts are not in chronological order. The first two come from an address to young people given in 1912, the rest from letters.]

I WANT to lay stress upon the importance of the Graces, and upon their sincerity. They are only insincere when they express nothing behind them and become gentilities. But gentilities are only the poor relations of the Graces. The real Graces smooth and sweeten life as much as the baskets of daffodils and hyacinths at the street-corners in the spring-time. They are generousities—something that we give beyond that which is exacted of us : they are part of the fine art of living.

WE all think a great deal now of the health of our bodies, and of the importance of opening our windows and airing our rooms. I wish we thought as much of airing our imaginations. To me poetry is just like that. It is like opening the window daily, and looking out, and letting in the air and the sunlight into an otherwise stuffy little room ; and if I cannot read some poetry in the day I feel more uncomfortable than I can tell you.

WHAT a curious feeling it is when a book finds you out and knows you better than your family and friends !

THERE is nothing one is so impatient with as one's own foibles when one sees them in others.

I **FEEL** a great wish to see —— again, only probably it would not be so nice. Those meetings don't repeat themselves. A strange Maeterlinck-like fact about intercourse is that people never know when they really do something for one, because, perhaps, they are only being something that comes naturally to them ; deeds are so often cross.

SHE is indeed a tangled skein of shreds of immortality. If one could only unravel her and wind her into a tiny ball !

As for that novel, I can only feel again that, to approach the deepest tragedies in humanity, one must either be entirely and diabolically an artist and the heart must be out of it, as in the case of Maupassant (and then one hates it), or must be supremely pitiful. I can't bear such a deep gulf sounded with a mere fishing-rod instead of with a plummet.

It seems to me rather curious that the silent worship of the Quakers encloses much the same idea as a passage of George Sand's on prayer—and she the most unquakerish person that ever existed ! She never feels so worshipful as when silence is made for her, at sunset or in the pauses of nature when she is waiting for the Fiat of God.

[Christmas Day.] I have just come back from Church. As I heard the Athanasian Creed sung in the highest of spirits in that prosperous Church, I felt life rather an untidy hash till I remembered that the one force that gave it unity was Love, and that Love ran through the day and the sordid church, and through all that was best inside those sealskin-jacketed Mamas and blowsy old gentlemen.

ALL the clergymen in the world cannot make one disbelieve in God,

[Christmas Day.] Surely, surely, however Christ is looked upon, if the life be looked upon at all, the world may rejoice in it to-day, in the ineffable wisdom, the boundless love for love's sake, the deep humility which alone is true dignity, the ideal so divine and so human that it compels sanctity. Never was there a Personality that so consecrated the obvious or made the ideal so much a matter of every day.

WHEN we lose ourselves and find ourselves we find God ; and negations, like death, vanish before Him. We seem to find Him in such strange ways—in the lowest depths as much as in the highest heights—through badness, through goodness—any way so long as it is real.

TENNYSON is a great witness to immortality, for he has passed through the high tide of sorrow and sees things as they are. He is a seer seeing, not only a poetic soul dallying with truth, all feeling and no reason. Perhaps it is when *the heart thinks* that the greatest truths are come by ; at any rate it is the men who have written their conviction straight from the fire of pain that are the best comrades in grief.

THE only comfort, I should say the only *rampart*, is one's passionate conviction of an Infinite Mystery, of the truth we dare not profane by intimate explanation,—that loss of life here may mean gain of fuller and intenser life there, in the next stage towards God ; that Carlyle's 'Everlasting Yea' is affirmative and therefore Life, and not 'der Geist der stets verneint' and therefore destruction ; and that the very powers of enjoyment and vividness which give the sting to death may be the powers which alone can give full realisation of the free-er, less entangled, life that our beloveds even now are leading.

I CAN only pray for you—not that He will take away the pain which is part of love and the tax of mortality, but that He may give you His and your best consolation, the life of love with all it brings, compared to which all else is as the ‘shadow of a magnitude.’

GRIEF is a most sacred possession and belongs to the back of one’s soul, and becomes part of one, behind life, a holy place where one can sit apart. And, to ‘make the *best* of life,’ one must remember Death, for that means Love and memory. Do what one will, Death has so much of one’s ‘best’ that one dare not touch life without it.

GRIEF is a strange country—is it not?—with its own ebb and flow, its own radiance from the past, so that some days, those upon which one lights on a forgotten memory, seem almost festal, like summer.

How the *happiness* of those we have loved and lost grows more and more vital to us, their unhappiness less! I suppose it is happiness which is *real* life, and we must will through to it even here.

THOUGHTS¹

1

WE should rather be Life's good comrades than its passionate lovers ; neither easily offended, nor imagining evil, yet not taking its affairs too lightly. Let us hold Life faithfully by the hand, loving it through fair and ill repute ; as good travellers, grumbling little, praising much, and sharing sun and shadow and wayside inns.

2

Life exacts good manners. If we importune her with demands, she treats us like poor relations. If we smile at her coldness, she smiles back again.

3

The art of living is an effort to gain style, to know where to express and where restrain. In this we only follow Nature, who strives to win beauty and order by unceasing experiments in giving forth and in elimination.

4

Mind is the best screen to hold between the emotions and life.

* * *

¹ [These are taken from two notebooks, and, as far as might be, arranged. See Introduction, p. 5.]

5

In a changeful world, a person with an unchanging heart has no choice but to become a poet or a bore.

6

Youth goes ; childhood need never be lost.

7

In youth there is a period of discomfort, because then the whole battery of a man's energies, meant for many, is directed upon himself.

8

Whilst we walk through the Valley of Youth, its beauty, its variety, its pleasant greensward and dancing lights and shadows, make us forget that it lies low. As we climb into Middle Age the road is steep, but we know that each step takes us nearer the sun.

9

The power of being amused is the power of middle-age, and to be content with being amused where we should once have intensely enjoyed is the first sign that youth is past.

10

The aim of middle life should be to cut one's coat according to one's cloth. The point is to be a good tailor and to have a distinguished cut.

11

(For my thirtieth birthday.)

It is not enough to accept the present ; we should welcome it with hospitality.

12

(For my fortieth birthday.)

Life is sometimes delightful, often disgusting, always infinitely worth living.

13

It is more difficult to love well as we grow older. Our conception of love becomes bigger and our sensibility acuter, because they are no longer blinded by the glorious egoism of youth.

14

The person who only regards one Tense of Life is bound in some degree to lose sanity.

15

The dangerous moment in life comes when men begin to over-value the past at the expense of the present. It is the moment for religious controversies, for ancestor-worship, for narrowing in, for exalting one set of people and excluding another. When we reach it, it means that we are growing old. But we need never reach it.

* * *

16

You must have been happy before you can give happiness.

17

When happiness has once sat upon the hearth, the fire is always alight.

18

The secret of happiness, as of art, lies in circumscription, in the power to confine an infinite idea within right limits.

Men must learn to restrain happiness within the boundaries of pleasure, as surely as music and poetry are fenced in by the laws of composition. But confinement must not become imprisonment, or the idea will lose life and stiffen into formalism.

19

The most mortal blunders in life arise from the confusion of pleasure with happiness.

20

Enjoyment should not be the screen by which we shelter our eyes from the light, but the sunshine which warms our blood.

21

Enjoyment lies in a sense of the value of what is enjoyed ; it implies the power of seriousness. Frivolity implies an ignorance of enjoyment, together with the show of it.

* * *

22

Les hommes marchent, les femmes sautent. Elles arrivent donc plus vite au bout, mais en ne se rendant pas compte du chemin.

23

Il y a une différence profonde entre les amitiés des hommes et celles des femmes. Les hommes sont liés par leurs plaisirs, les femmes par leurs chagrins.

24

C'est peut-être une ordonnance de Dieu que les femmes ne peuvent être Prêtres, puisqu'elles ont déjà, un peu trop, la nature des Prêtres, et par leurs qualités et par leurs défauts.

Les femmes naissent le plus souvent directrices dévouées, casuistes exaltées. Les meilleures sont nées avec le besoin d'écouter les confessions, de guérir, d'aider, de veiller sur les âmes. Dieu leur en a donné un brevet naturel. Il ne veut pas qu'elles se formalisent, qu'elles se pétrissent dans une hiérarchie.

25

When good women love power they generally confound it with the power of doing good.

26

The art of painting does not offer women the same kind of opportunity for their special endowments—those of critics and interpreters rather than of originators—as that of poetry, intense and personal poetry, and of novel-writing ; still less does music.

* * *

27

There are two sorts of people, those who want to be like their kind and those who want to be different from it.

28

Some people add to the depth of life, others to its brightness. And brightness is not necessarily more shallow than the depths—only more accessible.

29

Some people are like life-buoys, and weather the storm by dancing over the waves ; others are like the spars of a wreck lying tragically in mid-ocean for others to cling to. But more men are helped by the life-buoy, and wisdom is with the dancers.

30

Every deep nature has its stupidity, but to be absolutely clever is to be shallow-souled. The world wounded Pascal when it made Voltaire laugh.

31

There are people who always want to cut *your* coat according to *their* cloth.

32

Dull people are without an atmosphere. Therefore persons (among them many philanthropists) who are all character and no temperament are often the dullest of all.

33

Il y a des personnes comme des albums, dans lesquels tout le monde écrit. Tout le monde croit aimer l'album, tandis qu'en vérité il n'aime que ce qu'il y a inscrit.

34

Small people make small things into mysteries and explain away the mystery of big things.

35

To the superficial everything is superficial.

36

There is nothing that cannot be imagined by people of no imagination.

37

Civilisation provides a vast apparatus of mechanical facilities for the unimaginative.

38

It is dangerous to sanity when perceptive people have no imagination.

39

Frivolity is the art of avoiding set ties and lasting emotions.

40

Educated people often deceive themselves and others by putting business as a screen between their eyesight and reality. A Committee may be as frivolous as a gaming-table.

41

Work is a natural appetite of mankind ; even the most frivolous make a business of pleasure.

* * *

42

It is the intellectual and the frivolous who feel the need of conversation. The majority—the practical—seek colleagues rather than friends.

43

Talkers may be divided into those who wish to be amused and those who wish to be interested. If the two moods clash friction or boredom must ensue.

44

The power of self-expression is the essential thing in intercourse ; language is only the lesser part of it.

45

Free-trade in intercourse is the only law of companionship. A bore is a person who breaks it.

46

There is nothing that can spring such a gulf between one man and another as a laugh ; nothing that can so bridge it over as a tear.

47

Laughter partakes of the nature of what is laughed at.

* * *

48

If we take people wisely as they are, we go far towards making them what they should be.

49

Too much admiration judges more truly of character than too much severity. The former wakens possibilities of good ; the latter rouses faults that need never have appeared.

50

In philanthropy one must go on believing oneself to be of use in order to become so, on the same principle that one pursues in religion, acting its central truths as if they had already been proved, and thus alone verifying them.

* * *

51

The danger of the enthusiastic temperament is an unconscious exactingness from the bodies and spirits of others. The danger of the lymphatic temperament is to confound philosophy with indifference, and calm with a shrinking from emotion. The best things in the world spring from the union of both elements in one person.

52

A man's most dangerous fortress is his arm-chair, his most dangerous moment when he has no wish while sitting in it.

53

The calm which is reposeful is the calm of victory. It is force at rest.

54

Stillness is a force when it implies poise ; otherwise it is stagnation.

55

Most people who think that they love liberty love no more than the choice of their chain.

56

He who really loves liberty must walk alone.

57

The service of an idea is cloistral. It needs vocation ; it needs the austerity of a novitiate to prove its reality.

58

The only practical man is he who can attempt the impossible.

59

Moving off the rails may be better than not moving at all.

60

The man who is in the swim is one who does not get out of his depth. He is concerned with his own strokes and with the current. The drowning man knows more of the waters beneath, and of the sky above his head.

61

Those who depend on what 'people' think, depend on the thought of those who do not think.

62

Les bien-pensants sont souvent ceux qui ne pensent pas.

63

What we do not believe is of no importance. The secret of life is to discover what we believe.

64

The part of a man's beliefs which is based upon disillusion is not the valuable part of them.

65

A cynic is one who assigns unworthy causes to great things.

66

Some men are born and some are made cynics. The natural cynic is far worse to deal with than the man who has become one through disappointment. La Rochefoucauld was more immovable than Swift.

* * *

67

Hope is Faith in action.

68

The world is riddled by fear. Men fear their souls and their bodies ; they fear Love and God. The laws of morality only mean extended fear, and the earth will not grow better until fear turns into love,

69

Most of the confusions of life spring from a wrong use of the verb *must*.

70

Morality is the grammar of goodness.

71

Goodness is bound to strain at the leash of morality till it learns how to lead.

72

Preventive religion, the religion of fear, is a primitive form of faith bound to break before enlightenment. Between its fall and the dawn of incentive religion, the religion of love, there must be a time of moral disintegration. After the Middle Ages came the Renaissance; after Puritanism the Restoration.

* * *

73

We can tell a man by his friends as surely as we can *not* tell him by his loves.

74

In friendship everything and nothing must be taken for granted.

75

To those who come to stay in our hearts we can offer no less than our best; and our best is the truth.

76

(Of friendship.)

What was, is. What is not, can never be. What shall be, was,

* * *

77

The world would be a different place if we realised that Love is the most austere discipline of Life as well as its sweetest balm.

78

Great hearts should remember that their hunger is due to their own voracity, not to the deficiency of others. A genius for Love, like any other genius, must be content to exist for its own sake, not for what it receives. Love must be for ever loving or it would be miserable. This is the treaty it has made with happiness, and happiness honestly keeps the bargain.

79

When we cry out that we have loved too much, it is a sign that we love too little.

80

Love is of little help unless you can draw small cheques upon it.

* * *

81

The work of religion is to clear the will of desires and to set it free.

82

There are two conceptions of religion : that which adapts God to the needs of man ; that which fashions man to the needs of God.

83

Poetry and religion are truer than fact, because they attest the solidarity of life, and its permanence, through love.

84

The confusion of truth with fact is at the root of most of the mischief in the world.

85

There are men who always believe that a measure can kill an idea.

86

The poor man who sacrifices his food rather than go without his Music-hall is a misguided witness to the dominance of spirit over matter.

87

Men talk as if reality were outside us, as if it were more real to make shoes than to write books. But reality comes from within : it is what we bring to life : it is the currency of experience.

88

Sorrow does not really change people, it only develops what is already in them : that which they bring to it they will reap from it.

* * *

89

Life lies in experience, not in movement. To-day we are too apt to reduce life to movement, and our art is bound to grow narrower and more external—dependent upon science rather than upon ideas.

90

It might be well for the modern realist to remember that literalness is not the same as truth, nor curiosity as courage.

91

Art is an attempt to wrest what is permanent out of the transitoriness of things. The attempt to arrest what is transitory kills art and makes journalism.

92

The aesthete and the artist are often hostile one to another. The aesthete depends upon externals, the artist upon the inner life as well as the outer. The artist at work reacts upon his surroundings; he is free. The aesthete is the passive prey of his impressions.

93

Fastidiousness is a kind of asceticism of the intellect. Men can be as austere from taste as from religion.

94

The ugliness that comes from an individual way of seeing, or from the absence of adequate means, is attractive: it is disinterested. The ugliness that comes of a general way of living, or from the use of superfluous means, is repellent, and it is utilitarian. The one is grotesque, the other vulgar. There is a difference between the gargyle and the advertisement.

95

An inspiring human being, rich in instinct, is often an excellent writer who yet wholly lacks the vital spark of spontaneity; while others, in life elaborate or inhuman, become natural and convincing when they write. Literature is their element, their emotion. They make good creators and shocking lovers.

96

There are two kinds of literary creator: there is the creative writer and there is the creative reader. The creative reader is the true critic: he sees all he reads anew,

POEMS

1

GRASSE

THE milk-white town comes climbing,
Climbing over the hill,
With a grace that is past the rhyming,
And smiles at its own sweet will ;
The crystal dawn rejoices,
The cock crows silver-shrill,
And a din of sweet small noises
Wakes up where all was still.

The dewy sounds of labour
Arise most debonair ;
The bell calls each good neighbour
To say his morning prayer ;
The faithful hammer's clinking
Rings out a measured beat,
And the daisies open blinking
Amongst the young green wheat.

The little red roofs, they quiver
In the golden light of noon,
And the lowly voice of the river
Is heard both late and soon ;
A jocund noise of laughing
Rings up the sunny street,
Where the burghers sit a-quaffing
And sing that life is sweet,

The black-stoled priests come sweeping
Adown the moss-grown stair,
Where the market-place lies sleeping
In the shining evening air ;
And old age steals a-creeping
Whilst two grey gossips croon,
And the children rush home leaping
By the light of the rising moon.

Two tardy nuns step-keeping
Come wagging their holy heads,
And a white-souled star out-peeping
Will light them to their beds.
The reaper leaves his reaping,
The lambkins go to rest,
And a young bird rustles cheeping
To its olive-cradled nest.

But, as day's hum dies, sinking
Below the great red sun,
The little gold lights come winking
And flash out one by one ;
Sweet day in grey is hooding,
There's not a soul that frets,
And over all is brooding
The breath of violets.

1888.

2

A SONATA OF BEETHOVEN'S

Who knoweth whence we come and what we are ?
This Man of Music had eternal eyes,
And on these wings of Melody there lies
The echo of an answer from afar,

It tells how round a Soul stand mists of morn,
And still it knoweth not the morning nigh,
But gropes through doubts and does not see the sky,
Yet travels to the East where it was born ;
And how that Soul is purified by Pain,
And, learning perfect Love, forgetteth Fear ;
Still soars and loves, half-free ; yearns once again ;
Then turns to flame celestial, crystal-clear,
And, standing rapt beyond our Now and Here,
Cries out to men to suffer and attain.

1888.

3

A WISH

DEATH, when I die, in Autumn let it be,
In Autumn when across the spiky furze
There floats the film of silver gossamers ;
In early Autumn, when the cherry-tree
Is touched with flame, the beech with russet gold,
And o'er the fallow field and purple lea
The starlings scream, and swallows put to sea,
And woolly mists hang light on wood and wold ;
Now when no sound is heard, unless it were
The thud of acorns on the wrinkled earth,
While thoughts of summer linger in the air
Sweet with the smell of apples ; now when Mirth
Is grey as Grief, and Peace is everywhere,
Bring me, O Death, into the arms of Birth.

1896.

4

THE Path of Love is made for twain ;
Hate walketh not alone :
The Path of Death and the Path of Pain
Are only trod by one.

Yet he who hath ta'en the Path of Pain
 Hath found both friend and foe ;
 The depths of weakness, the power of meekness,
 The strength to overthrow.

1902.

5

AFTER MARY COLERIDGE'S DEATH

A LATE day of summer is over ;
 It has not been long.
 The bee has gone out of the clover ;
 Hushed is the song.

Yet the sweetness grows sweeter and lingers,
 While the form of it dies ;
 And the song does not cease with the singers,
 Though night close their eyes.

When dark falls a light shines the stronger,
 A flame burns more clear ;
 The day would grow grey were it longer—
 It is past—it is here.

1907.

6

IN THE STATUE-HALL AT THE LOUVRE

THE generations of the dead,
 White and free and very still,
 Wait us in infinite halls, until
 We too grow strangely quieted.
 Their number who stand above good and ill,
 Their measureless number who hath said ?

For each of these did the salt tears flow,
And the head was bowed and the heart was sore,
Hundreds and thousands of years ago,
Hundreds and thousands of years and more :
Yet we are weeping for one as though
No man had ever wept before.

1907.

7

MEMORY

THE memory of that which was
Floats like a water-lily leaf
Over the tideless depth of grief,
Dark and cold and still as glass,
There where no change can ever pass,
Where shadows are long and light is brief.

The living thought of the days gone by,
With roots deep down below the deeps,
Gently rocks and gently sleeps,
Shining and green where the waters lie,
Until to him who vigil keeps
What was is the life that cannot die.

1907.

8

DEATH AND THE DAWN

DAMP and dying and dark
Was the night ;
Closely shrouded and stark
Lay the light :
And the tale of the stars was told,
Save for a tremulous spark

In a streak of misty white.
 The earth was heavy and cold
 As a mourner's heart, and the sight
 Of the dawn seemed far from the wold.

When—from the deeps of the dew
 And the dark,
 Sudden, up, out of view,
 Shot the lark.
 Swift as a flame she flew
 To her invisible mark,
 Swift as a soul that knew
 Where the dawn would be :
 The lark pierced through to the blue
 And the soul was free.

1908.

9

THE LAVENDER HEDGE

ALL day long like things of light,
 All day long without noise or stir,
 Flutter and float the butterflies white
 Over the hedge of lavender.
 Blue is the sky, a milky blue,
 Silvery blue is the lavender too,
 Sweeter than honey, richer than myrrh.

Poets' souls are the butterflies white,
 Dancing spirits come from afar,
 Come from the land of lost delight
 Where all the ancient raptures are ;
 Poets return to float and fly
 Over a blossoming memory,
 Over a hedge of lavender.

HAMBLEDON, 1908.

10

TRIANON

THE hand of Autumn rests upon
The dreaming woods of Trianon ;
On silver birch and on beech turned gold,
The woods of pleasure long since grown old,
And of youth still playing at games that are dead
On a floor strewn thick with brown and red,
Where Death himself cannot fall cold
Or lay him down in a quiet bed.
For here, where white mists rise from the mould,
Young Love once stopped in the midst of a song,
And Life broke off in a tale half-told
Before Life knew that the tale was wrong.
And now nought stays but a floating swan
To guard the silence of Trianon.

October 1918.

11

AND I, who know what Love, what Beauty is,
I might have been a poet, might have told
Of all the pain and all the summer bliss
Earth and the heart contain a thousandfold.
I might have been a poet but for this,
That He who fashions spirits did withhold
The final tip of flame—the flame all His—
Which turneth thought to words of molten gold.
For ever must I aim, for ever miss,
Wanting the gift that 's neither bought nor sold.
Yet have I that which frees from Life's caprice,
And makes the day fresh and the footstep bold ;
Mine are the dreams that bring a central peace,
And mine the joy that never can grow old.

1901.

GLADYS LEONORA PRATT

THE existence of Gladys Leonora Pratt was a series of dull dislocated sensations. She led a 'gay life,' as it was called in her professional terminology; and she led it in a dirty little room with a curtained window that would not open, at 259 Brecon Street, Euston, a dingy narrow street that ended in a blind wall. The dull sensations were many, but there was no thread to bind them together or give them sequence; she did not know the reason why she did this or that, unless it were to eat or drink or get warm. She could not count upon herself from one hour to another; she was the prey of each passing impression; and she felt no wish to be different. Her consciousness indeed was like a sheet—none too white—across which were thrown, now blurred, now clearer, a number of incoherent lantern-slides. Among them, it is true, there were some more vivid than the rest—spots of light which punctuated the dead level of the days; but what these particular images were Gladys Leonora alone could tell, and, as far as may be, she must tell them for herself.

There were the evenings when your 'chap' took you to the picture palaces, or to the halls, or to some theatre over the river, where a lovely lady in yellow satin, a real lady, just like the poster on the hoardings, committed a real crime. And the night would end up with a drink in a jolly bar, brilliant with electric light, where every one forgot drab to-morrow and drab yesterday; and sometimes you danced and men were sweet on you, although they were not always pleasant, until your own chap grew jealous and hit you—

only you didn't know much what happened till next morning. Or sometimes he was in a good mood and gave you a set of glass beads, or cigarettes, or some liquorice sweets ; or Mother Mack, ' her wot keeps the house,' was in a good temper and cooked a currant pudding for dinner, and you had the taste of it in your mouth long afterwards. And then there were the bad hours, equally distinct on the lantern sheet. In the first place there were your fears—shapeless, indefinite terrors which jumped out upon you, you didn't know how, and made you feel sick and scream. You got them when you were alone in the dark, or in hot close weather and in thunderstorms, or when you had had nobody to talk to for some time. And there were the days when your chap came home drunk and gave you a black eye ; or when Mother Mack was in a bad temper and starved you ; or, worse still, when the weather was bad and you ' got no work,' and brought no one home, and she beat you, and you had the hump.

And then there were other slides—pictures, some of them, from times remoter and more confused ; but those pictures were the strongest of all. They were very few, though. There was a wood of blue-bells where you had seen a big butterfly : it was at home when you were eight, and it was near Stroud. And there was a pearl necklace you had once caught sight of on the neck of a Jewess who was looking out of a window over a tailor's shop in the Charing Cross Road. And there was a child with fair curls that ran to you in the street, because it took you for its mother. And there was a big fight in Hampstead Road, when young Muriel's bloke licked old Lily's bloke, and ' Golly, it was a bloody game.' And there were those words, ' Far, far away,' from the poetry piece you once learned at school, that came into your head, you couldn't say why, and went on sounding there like a tune—but it made you feel nice and comfortable. And there was the teacher with the blue eyes—at school too—the one

you thought so sweetly pretty. And there was your chum at the beginning 'here,' Sally Riley, who was taken off to 'the Castle' (Quod, that is) as a 'drunk and disorderly,' and had to wear a cap and number; and her it was wot told you how dreadful it was not to talk or hear no noise, and how it made you scream. And, of course, there was your mother—but she gave you an odd feeling when you thought of her. You didn't want to, and yet you did. You were so proud of having a respectable mother, different from most of the girls; but you couldn't bear to think of her; and you couldn't really remember her, because she died when you were nine; only you knew she had a terrible cough. And you knew, too, she had stuck to your father, though he had never kept his word to marry her and was cruel bad to her. And after she died—and before it—he brought back strange women with loud laughs, who carried on with him, and were fearful unkind to you; till one day you were sick of it all, and you had a young man of your own, and you stayed out late with him two nights, and your father gave you a hiding, and the third night you were afraid of going home (home was Marylebone way), and your bloke treated you at the 'Angel,' and you got pretty well screwed, and you laughed a good deal and said 'yes' to all he asked, and you remembered nothing more and woke up 'here.' And 'here' you had stayed ever since, you didn't quite know how long, only when you came it was before Christmas, and now Christmas was past again. (That last picture was longer than a picture—it was a memory, one of the very few in Gladys Leonora's possession.)

And after the first strangeness—you were frightened and excited for a week—it didn't seem very different from home, except that you got better food and worse colds. It was cruel work standing out at night in all weathers, and Mother Mack didn't leave you much money, scarcely enough for ostrich feathers or a plush 'pallytoe,' and hardly ever

enough for cheap scents. It was duller here in the day, because at home you used to go and work at the sweet-factory, and here you only slaved for old Mack till the nights came ; and they were monotonous too, and you were dog-tired, and men were brutes and often you hated them, and all the same there seemed no doing without them. As for your pals, sometimes you liked them and walked arm-in-arm with them in the Euston Road ; and sometimes, when Mother Mack favoured them or they riled you, you hated them, and wanted to hurt them. Now and then you did, and they hurt back again. But if they were ill or hungry, you stood by them and went without yourself. And you never would have taken the smallest thing belonging to them, or to any one, not you ! You were as honest as the day. That was perhaps the one fact that you knew about yourself. But did you know it ? Directly you tried to put things together, the thread somehow snapped.

Now and again you had 'wishes.' They drifted like aimless winds across this waste of rubble, and yet, aimless though they were, they carried something like a fragrance from afar : for one moment they made an air-current. You got them most often in the spring, at the time when you would suddenly burst out crying and your shoulders shook with sobs for nothing at all ; or else odd things set you off—a basket of daffodils at the street corner, or a barrel-organ playing a slow tune. You frequently laughed, too, for no reason, excepting that others near you were laughing ; or because when you went out walking you saw somebody different from the rest—a coloured man, or a very tall one, or a woman with a squint. The crying, however, was different ; it made you feel better, and your 'wishes' often came along with it. Not wishes for finery or motor-cars—another sort. You wished to see some green grass and some trees (Mother Mack never let you get as far as the parks), and you wanted to have a baby of your own ; it was when

you saw the children playing, above all when that little girl ran up to you and put up its face to be kissed. And occasionally, at rare intervals, you vaguely wished to be good. You didn't know how, or even try to know; but you thought of your mother, and once when you felt like that you gave Mother Mack the go-by and, when none of the girls was anywhere about, you nipped into a church. Gawd! wouldn't they have jeered and pinched if they had seen you! But when you got inside you couldn't understand a word. Still, the organ and the flowers and the smell of fur and heat was very nice, and you liked the quiet when the ladies put their faces down.

Church was tabooed by all self-respecting ladies of Brecon Street and other streets like Brecon Street: church and chapel and kind ladies—kind ladies, perhaps, most of all. What had they got to do with the other ladies of Brecon Street? And they thought they had. They seldom got at them, but when they did they used silly words like 'pure' and 'save' and 'religious'—words that had nothing to do with anything. If they spoke to you, you knew what to do: you let fly a volley of your own language, and you made one of your own jokes—and serve them jolly well right for interfering. Outside such volleys, Gladys comprehended few words and possessed fewer, not enough to make ideas with; and when she read, if they began with the same letter and were of about the same length, one looked much the same to her as another.

But when she felt angry with kind ladies she generally stopped, suddenly checkmated by something else. The something was almost the most vivid of all her odd set of lantern-slides. It was a sight she had seen, and it had left a picture which lasted—an indelible picture which came back oftener than the rest and with greater force. She had seen it one late afternoon in November in Roach Lane, next turning but two from Brecon Street. It was a Satur-

day, and Roach Lane market was in full swing. The dark had fallen and yellowish fog hung in the air, so that the flaring torches, stuck in each of the crowded stalls—so crowded that you could hardly thread your way between them, threw a tawny light on the blackness, and strange shadows on the faces of the jostling buyers and sellers. The kerb-stone was thick with them, elbowing and pushing one another with good-natured oaths and loud haggings, while they fingered the dried haddocks or felt the quality of second-hand plush with the hands of connoisseurs. Gladys was the quicker to notice the incongruous figure of a 'kind lady' issuing rather precipitately from a door down the Lane. A woman with dishevelled hair, 'more than half seas over,' Gladys noted, ran after her and struck her, so that the lady staggered against a stall, and it would have gone worse with her had not the woman's attention been caught by the sight of a man bargaining at the clearer end of the alley. She made for him at once, and the lady, though she gave a wince of pain, said no word. She was a queer one, thought Gladys, to come along here and get that, when she might stay comfortable in the West End minding her own business. What for did the bloomin' idiot want to go and meddle with them as she had no concern with? It must be that she got somethink out of it, a pryin' in other ladies' houses like that! But there was no time for further comment, for at this moment the attention of Roach Lane was diverted. The woman who had made for the man was catching it hard from him with a stick, and she was crying—crying at the top of her voice. The sight and sound were so common in Roach Lane that no one stirred from his place, but the little groups stopped marketing and looked on, half-curious, half-indifferent, as they might watch a hackneyed play. Only the lady did anything. She suddenly ran across the road, caught the man's arm, and, taking him by surprise, contrived to knock

the stick out of his hand. The woman fell upon her at once with her fists. 'It's you agin, yer sniveller, is it? I'll teach yer, by Gawd, I will!' she cried; and the man, stung to fury, lashed out blindly and threw the interloper down. This was a new sensation, even in Roach Lane. A crowd gathered round her, Gladys among the rest. 'Well, I'm darned if this ain't a rum go,' she muttered. But a policeman came up, and then there was a rummer go still. The lady, who had struggled to her feet, her hat crushed in, her clothes all splashed with mud, refused to give the couple in charge. 'It was my fault,' she said, 'I attacked him first'; so the policeman did nothing but support her, and she passed away, limping, down the street. Only, as she did so, Gladys caught sight of her face; and she never forgot it. It was the face of an angel she had once seen in a shop on a Christmas card. She did not look angry, only pitiful and very quiet, and her hat had a bunch of lovely Parmer voylets in it, and they was all bashed in and spoilt, which was a dreadful shame; she had turned orful white, too, and yet she had never made one sound. Any gurl *she* knew would have screamed—wouldn't they jist? It was the look in her eyes, though, which gave Gladys that queer feeling—one she had never had before—a kind of feeling as if she were going to choke. What on earth did she go and do that for? She couldn't have anything to make out of *that*; and the woman had hurt her just a moment ago. Well, she'd be blowed if it wasn't the rummest go! She *was* a plucky one, no mistake. Then that look in her eyes returned to Gladys, and the queer choked feeling came again, and deep down in her, where she could not get at it, there rose, or there tried to rise, a wish that she could do a spunky thing like that—something handsome; and still more that she could look like that about the eyes, and have pale Parmer voylets in her hat. Yet all the time she knew that the lady belonged to Church and the West End, and

all the things in life that were most against the code of Brecon Street.

This had happened weeks since, and weeks were ages to Gladys ; but the picture had not faded in the least when it recurred to her vision, although the lantern had since then added other slides to the confused store of her impressions—the impressions of which she seemed to be made up. For such, in some measure as she stands here, was Gladys Leonora Pratt.

That is to say, as far as her inward self was concerned. There was also the outer woman. Her appearance was not adventurous. She seemed as like to many other Gladys Leonoras as is one sparrow to another. Rather short and thick-set she was, with shapely hands and arms, round which jingled cheap gilt bangles ; with heavy cheeks, sallow complexion and nondescript features, except that her small brown eyes always looked you straight in the face. She had tried to dye her indistinguishable brown hair, straight hair, parted on one side, that lay flat and heavy upon her forehead as if it had no life left ; but the gold dye had not taken properly and remained in patches that showed the brown underneath. Mother Mack had let her know what she thought of it ; she had also let her know what she thought of her cough.

For, at the moment when we find her, Gladys was coughing pretty badly. She was sitting in her stuffy little room where everything was soiled—bed-linen, and yellow plush divan, and close-drawn muslin blinds, and the folk who entered there. There was a looking-glass, and a shaky chest of drawers, of which one foot was wanting. A man's bowler lay upon it, with three cigarette-ends and a cheap cigarette-box, empty, an oriental beauty's head upon the lid. On the mantel-shelf stood Gladys's one treasure, a biscuit china ornament—a little girl holding a large hat. You put flowers into the hat, only she never had any to

put there ; but she thought it the most beautiful thing she had ever seen, and sometimes she imagined a red rose in it. She had looked at it for a fortnight in a fancy-shop off Tottenham Court Road, and once—in the early days of Brecon Street—she had asked a chap to give it her, and he had. But that seemed long ago. For the dingy little room had, since then, seen a series of dingy inmates, chiefly under-clerks and shop-assistants ; and she had not liked one of them more than another, until three weeks ago.

And then there was an exception. The exception was in the jewellery line ; he ‘ travelled ’ for a city firm, and he was German. It is not to be supposed that Gladys nourished an interesting passion, or even any feeling that came near what we call love ; but there was within her some faint sluggish stirring of life, some movement of a half-sentient germ that might, somewhere else, with sun and rain have struggled towards birth. Her soul for one moment had turned in its sleep. The traveller in jewellery had given her a kind of sense of home—an inarticulate desire to settle, even to marry him, the first of such desires that she had experienced. He had talked politely to her and asked after her cough, just as if she had not lived in Brecon Street ; and one evening he had had a cold and had let her put on a mustard-leaf. And he was clean and fair, and wore a real white collar, not a paper one ; and he had given her his photograph, quite the gentleman, with his hand in a cuff resting upon a marble table, an india-rubber plant by his side. He had come back every evening for a week and more ; then he had gone off, like the rest. It had not made her unhappy ; but the first day or two she felt restless and rather uncomfortable, as if she had lost something, and even now his clean face came up before her eyes. It was one of the clear-cut images in her gallery.

He had given her more than his photograph. In the first place there was a treat at the theatre ; and the play was

about a pore gurl like her, wot married a bloomin' toff and had a face like the lady's in Roach Lane, the same as the angel's on the Christmas card ; and her sister was cruel jealous and wanted the oof ; so she strangled the bride in her bed with the coverlet, and the strangling was finished that clever and easy—every bit of it done on the stage—till Gladys felt she was a doin' of it herself. And then there came the bride's scream—quite 'orrible—and the sister stifled that too. But after the play was ended it went on ringing in her ears ; and so it had done since, though it was just over a week ago that she had heard it.

Besides the treat, ' he ' had made her a wonderful present ; it had superseded the china vase ; it was her most precious possession, such as she had never thought to own. For it was a brooch—a real gold brooch ; one of those shaped like a merry-thought bone, and on it was ' Mizpah ' in false rubies. She could not think much of the giver ; she soon liked the brooch a great deal more. It came to be almost her only thought all day—how she would look wearing it, and how the gurls would envy her, but most of all how she could hide it from Mother Mack : you never knew what old Mack would grab.

Especially just now. For soon after she got it (the day before he left), her cough became worse, and her cheeks grew pale and thin, and her ' work ' fell off, and Mack, the old Devil, began to threaten her and to say she did not pay her way. So Gladys tied the brooch up in a stocking at the back of her drawer, where no one could get at it, and felt quite easy in her mind.

The day after she had done this, the calamity happened. Her cough was constant and she felt too bad to move. There had been a hand-to-hand set-to with Mack, who was the worse that afternoon for neuralgia and for drink. She had heaped vile names upon Gladys Leonora, had hit her about the head and pushed her out of doors ; she would

have no ugly devils as couldn't pay their keep, she shouted. And when in the late afternoon Gladys came back, she found her drawers rifled and the brooch gone. Mother Mack had stolen it, curse her ! And it was only too clear what she would say if she were asked for it ; she had taken it as her right, to pay what was owing to her for food. It was a damned lie ; she owed her nothing, bloody thief that she was ; and so she would tell her. But at the very thought she cowered and knew she could not ; she felt the blows of that big thick arm raining upon her back ; she was powerless against her. No, she would run away, she would. Yet where had she to go ? 259 Brecon Street was the only roof she could think of that would shelter her. She did not dream of informing the police ; they were the natural enemies of herself as well as of Mother Mack—of herself and of all her clan. There is a code of honour in Brecon Street—limited, no doubt, like the locality, but more rigorous than many wider codes.

Gladys Leonora was seized with a paroxysm of blind helpless fury. She tried to scream, but her cough had made her hoarse, and the words stuck in her throat. Then she beat the floor with her fists, and she got up and beat the door too, and she knocked her poor head against the wall. After which, thoroughly exhausted, she sank in a heap upon the ground. Her chest heaved with loud, dry sobs, and she cried till she thought she would break in half. As she lay there, the room grew dark and dreadful. Mechanically she heard the rain drip outside, and the bell of a Baptist chapel some way off sound on with a muffled regularity ; mechanically, too, she heard young Muriel and Lily go downstairs. ' Mother Mack 's that bad with her neuralgy, she 's gone to bed,' Muriel was saying, and the words entered Gladys's ears without her taking in their meaning ; then the house-door shut, and all was quiet again.

At last she got up, stiff and aching from the hard boards ;

she had not had a crumb since morning, and her hands and legs were trembling. As she stood there, the first thing her eye fell upon was the open drawer where the brooch had been. An awful wave of hatred swept over her, such as she had never before experienced. It had her—she turned giddy and reeled. She must do something to old Mack, something at once. But, again, what? And how could she do it? Mack was three times as strong as herself. All of a sudden the words she had heard automatically came back into her head. ‘Mother Mack is in bed with her neuralgy,’ and when she had the neuralgy they always called her the Hell-cat, it made her double as bad as usual; besides, the gurls had gone out—even they would not be there to defend her; she was alone in the house with Mother Mack. . . . Still she would do *something*. The fierceness and giddiness grew worse. Yes, she *would* do something. What, she had no idea. She only felt that she must rush downstairs, out, vaguely, into the dark, and smash. What she would smash, she did not know.

Downstairs then she ran, Maenad-like, her hair half fallen on her shoulders. Her pals’ black empty room stared at her across the landing till it frightened her, but she was running so fast that she had little time for any sensation. She did not even notice the strange suffocating smell there was on the staircase—an extraordinary smell, strong enough even to overpower the usual stale perfume of paraffin and onions which was chronic in the house. As she made for the front-door, it reached even her benumbed senses; it gave her nerves a kind of awakening shock. She had smelled it ‘here’ once before in the kitchen; somewhere the gas must be escaping. What did that matter to her? She had her hand upon the door, when her attention was really arrested. From Mother Mack’s room on the right of the entry passage there came a strange muffled groan; then another groan as if from one unconscious; then the

heavy broken gasps again. Curiosity, savage curiosity, took hold of Gladys. Old Mack was evidently asleep; she could not spring out and beat her. Stealthily she opened the bedroom door and stood upon the threshold. But at first she staggered, almost falling backwards, choked by the fumes that met her. It was here then that the gas was escaping—from the jet near the mantel-shelf. Mother Mack's bedstead was opposite the fireplace, along the wall, with its foot towards the door. The street-lamp outside shed through the window a fitful half-light upon the room, and when Gladys had stood there a moment her eyes got used to it and she saw. As she looked upon the heavy, helpless, prostrate form, that wild hatred surged up in her again, and it passed into an active thirst for vengeance. Yes—she must do something to pay her out. You had only to glance at old Mack's grey face to know that she could not jump up. She was drugged, stifled by the gas; she knew nothing; if it went on long enough it would finish her; she would have gone by now, very likely, if the jet had been nearer and if there were not such a draught from the door. Yes, she must pay the old brute out.

Then, as Gladys stood there, something happened. There rose before her, till she seemed in it, of it, the strangling scene upon the stage. The figure in the bed here was lying in the same position as the figure had lain there; the light was the same, falling from without on the dark room within. And Gladys was waiting on the threshold of the room in just the same place as the sister had waited. What easier than to go on with the part—to take the rug off the bed as the sister had done, get your fingers round that unresisting neck, and make an end of her? She might revive if she were left; Muriel and Lily, or their chaps, might come in and save her. But Gladys was scarcely conscious of these thoughts, she was so much part of the play.

Children, Geniuses, Gladys Leonoras put nothing between

idea and action—there where the average man puts reason. Children, Geniuses and Gladys Leonoras get suggestions and at once convert them into life. With children they become games, with geniuses creation, with Gladys Leonoras crimes or heroisms—the kind of heroisms that makes newspaper-readers exclaim at the wonder of them in such surroundings. As Gladys advanced relentless, like one who was walking in a dream, the deed was nearly done.

And then, again, something happened. Without reason, in the flash of a moment, another picture put itself over the scene on the stage, and obliterated it. It was the picture of the lady limping painfully across Roach Lane—the lady with the angel-face outlined clearly on the tawny darkness, as she passed between the flaring stalls and disappeared. The image was so strong and unexpected that the other image yielded before it, faded off the sheet. Gladys was no longer on the stage; she was absorbed in the lady. And once more that queer wish came over her—the sense how nice it would be to feel ‘like that.’ Her muscles relaxed, her arm fell. In an instant, vision changed to action. She ran to the jet and turned the gas off; then to the window. With forces strained to the utmost, she wrenched the tightly-jammed bolt and flung it open, and she threw the door open too: she had seen these things done when the gas escaped before in the kitchen. Next, she turned to Mother Mack. Brandy she knew was what the ambulance men—they in medals and uniforms—gave to people who fainted in a crowd. And the brandy-bottle was never far from Mack; no difficulty in finding it now, for it stood, half-empty, on a chair near the bed. She poured some down her throat: her mouth, which was all swollen, was still open, but her breathing, although it was laboured, was getting better. Presently her eyelids fluttered, and she moved; then she turned on her side and made an indistinct muttering. It was high time for Gladys to be

off. If Mack woke to find her there, she'd play Old Nick and suspect her of taking the brandy, or anything else. No, she hadn't no mind to stick out that. She slipped away to the front-door and opened it. Their neighbour, a pendant to Mack, was standing as usual on her doorstep. 'So Mrs. Mack had the neuralgics, pore dear? Oh, no, *she* wouldn't mind comin' in and givin' an eye to her while the gurls were out.' Gladys mentioned no word of what had just happened. She was in a tremor lest it should be discovered that she had been in Mack's room.

By now it was the hour for her to go out on her usual beat. Only she did not feel as usual. She was no longer tired and sick of everything. Her cough had stopped, and she had a sense of peace foreign to her—peace that was almost pleasure. For the moment, as she went up to her room, she had even forgotten about the brooch. So she stood quite cheerful before the glass (it had a crack across the middle), and put a patch of cheap rouge upon either cheek; after which she tousled her hair, pinned it up, cocked her big velvet hat with its uncurled green feather at the professional angle upon her head, and went out into the drizzling mist. 'We shan't get much work to-night, it's raining,' said Irene from next door. Gladys only nodded and walked on, for nothing seemed to matter much this evening. And she went to wait at her customary corner.

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The germ of the spirit lay dormant again in the inchoate body with which nature had provided it—the muddy tenement where, in spite of all things, it had kept itself alive. And there was joy in heaven. The Angels felt no need of waiting till Gladys Leonora Pratt should repent.



Edith Sichel

aged 25

Engraved by J. H. Smith

WOMEN AS LETTER-WRITERS

‘ A LETTER behoves to tell about oneself,’ writes Mrs. Carlyle to John Sterling, and she could certainly speak as one having authority. She hits the truth, for women at any rate. Good letters need not necessarily talk *of* their writers, but they must, consciously or unconsciously, tell *about* them ; must, above all else, transmit their personality. And the means of transmission becomes almost as important as the matter in hand. It is one thing to have something to say and another to have the art of saying it ; an art which must always be individual to the writer, and which, in a flash, conveys the essence of his subject in so intimate a manner that the reader feels like his confidant. It is an art hard to regulate by any general rules, except that of simplicity, especially in the case of letter-writing. The sweetest and most pensive of correspondents, Dorothy Osborne, said all there was to say about it as long ago as 1653 : ‘ All letters, methinks, should be free and easy as one’s discourse ; not studied, as an oration, nor made up of hard words, like a charm. ’Tis an admirable thing to see how some people will labour to find out terms that may obscure plain sense, like a gentleman I know, who would never say “ the weather grew cold,” but that “ winter began to salute us.” I have no patience with such coxcombs, and cannot blame an old uncle of mine that threw the standish at his man’s head, because he writ a letter for him where, instead of saying (as his master bid him) “ that he would have writ himself, but he had the gout in his hand,” he said that “ the gout in his hand would not permit him to put pen to paper.” ’

Dorothy Osborne herself here gives the best proof that not only simplicity but also spontaneity is needed, if a letter is to be perfectly satisfactory—spontaneity, which is a matter of the heart as well as the head, and implies the invaluable possession of mental sympathies. The best letter-writers, indeed, give the impression of their correspondents' personality along with their own and vary, almost imperceptibly, with each of them. A brilliant critic of 'The Art of Letter-writing'¹ has recently told us that 'as a jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears, so a letter must depend upon the person to whom it is addressed.' Many of the persons thus addressed have been women, and in this way alone they have exercised a great influence on letter-writing—on the letter-writing of men. Letter-receiving has been a calling for them, and, skilled in the arts of evoking and provoking alike, they have become as good as a School for style, and an Academy of nimble wit.

But they have been far from playing only a passive part. Letter-writing seems, indeed, an art especially invented to suit the talents of women, and (since their defects are often their graces) even to suit their foibles. Women are not creators; they are interpreters, critics; their best qualities, sympathy and insight, are the essence of criticism; and good letter-writing *is* criticism—of life, of people, of art, as the case may be. The quick perceptions and elusive grace that are natural to women, their habit of producing and their gift for expressing themselves, their mastery of detail, their power of subtle suggestion and of intuition, their very inability to sustain thought and therefore to become heavy, their faculty for intimacy which sums up all the rest—these are so many qualifications for the writing of letters, and of personal letters in particular.

Generally speaking, correspondence can be divided into

¹ 'The Art of Letter-writing,' by H. W. Paul, *Nineteenth Century* for July 1898,

two chief kinds—the letters written for one, and the letters written for more than one. The first are the intimate letters, often from people comparatively unknown; only existing to reveal individual character, and bringing with them a particular and penetrating charm, a sense of personal discovery. Those of the second sort are written with an eye to an audience, whether it consist of posterity, of the public, or only of a coterie. They are literary achievements that belong to all the world, and we have no desire to appropriate them, no enjoyment of them as private property. They are not so much loved as admired, especially by men, and it is perhaps by men that they are best written. The lovable, intimate letter, on the contrary, comes most naturally from a woman's pen, and, as often as not, the masculine mind thinks it trivial. But the foremost letter-writers of the world have contrived to combine both set form and personal distinction. Madame de Sévigné, of course, achieved this and, in herself, includes almost every sort of letter-writing. It is dull however to discuss the unquestionable, and to comment upon Madame de Sévigné's position in this respect is as futile as comment upon Shakespeare's position as a dramatist.

If we come to the letters that aim at being literature, and to such women as have written them, we find any kind of classification impossible. Eloquent letters, political letters belong to this province, such as Madame Roland's heroic and persuasive epistles to the Girondins, which are necessarily written from a platform. But the great era of correspondence in France immediately preceded Madame Roland and the Revolution. It was the period of writing for a coterie—the most elaborate kind of writing; for nothing can be more self-conscious than sentences penned for the perusal of a group of critical intimates, whose opinion is vital to the writer. Not a note could be composed in certain circles without being read aloud to them, and this in the days

when one lady alone sent sixteen thousand letters to one gentleman ; when not only gentlemen wrote to ladies, but adoring ladies wrote to each other, once, sometimes twice, in twenty-four hours, on topics as often as not impersonal. The queen of these brilliant but rather malicious Muses was Madame du Deffand, the most brilliant, the most malicious of them all. Her physical blindness seemed to endow her with an extra acuteness of mental vision, and her pen darts like lightning, withering wherever it passes. Byron himself could not be more bored or more unkind than Madame du Deffand, and she had none of the high spirits which often redeemed his sallies. In her day kindness was too often confounded with stupidity. She certainly fulfilled Mrs. Carlyle's injunction to letter-writers, and her letters may be cited as masterpieces of self-revelation. They are chiefly written to her friend the Duchesse de Choiseul ; to Voltaire, on whom she practised platonics ; and to Horace Walpole, with whom, when she was seventy, she had an arduous flirtation. She demanded a heart from others, but did not care to possess one herself ; she tried to replace it by a large and lucid mind, which wielded epigram like a sword and forced upon her a panoramic view of the evils of life, without any cloud-effects to soften them down. Her letters seem made up of mind and decorum—sceptical decorum—and sound no higher note than an enthusiastic avoidance of discomfort.

Here, for instance, is her description of her day. She has 'torn herself out of bed that her *frisure*, begun the day before, may be completed.' Her 'poor head is overpowered by four heavy hands . . . her curling-irons resound in her ears.' An officer and an archbishop are chattering to her ; her head-dress and panier are being prepared. Suddenly a voice from the next room announces that the King is passing on his way to Mass ; it is church time. 'Allons !' she cries in her letter, 'quick, my head-gear, my muff, my fan, my

prayer book! Ne scandalisons personne! My chair! My porters! One, two, three, off!’ Or if we want her philosophy, ‘There is but one decision to make about the world,’ she says: ‘to let it be as it is; to laugh at it without pretending to reform it; and to abandon la Maréchale to her levity, her low instincts, and her inconsequences, without bothering one’s head about her.’

‘Elles sont comme il plaît à Dieu, comme elles vous viennent; et si vous avez de l’esprit ce n’est pas votre faute,’ says Madame du Deffand to a witty Abbé about his letters. She and her contemporaries often thought they were admiring spontaneity when they were carefully cultivating lightness, for the prevailing worship of mind made self-consciousness natural. Her seriousness—and she could be admirably serious—is so artistic that it seems simple, almost obvious, and one finds oneself wondering why such essential things have not been said before. The quality of unostentatious gravity is the distinction of French writers, and we sometimes find these ladies of last century having the most delicate literary discussions on paper.

It was the fashion of the times also (and Madame du Deffand was its leader) to write pages of analysis of one’s friends’ characters—and of one’s own. Women are audaciously interested in themselves, and therefore audaciously personal, even in such deliberate epistles as these. They are also unabashed by detail, and can trifle to profound purpose. Certain letters, like thistle-down, live only by virtue of their lightness, and skim over Time too quickly for him to lay hold on them. What man—what Horace Walpole even—would dare to confide to an audience such a tissue of gossamer scandal and delicate intuition as most of these letters represent? Yet in these airy nothings lies the secret of French genius—the Genius of Intercourse.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was more ambitious than Madame du Deffand. She did not confine her attention

to a coterie, but wrote for posterity, and rather rashly proclaimed that her letters would be read long after Madame de Sévigné's were forgotten. In other respects she reminds us of the blind old Frenchwoman, especially in her power of epigram and Book of Ecclesiasticus wisdom. But she, at any rate, regarded her race with a cold kindness which made her take pains to help it; her philosophy, too, was no mere shield against spiritual discomfort and showed some of the real Stoic's courage and austerity. Her letters reveal a curious mixture of later Rome and modern London; they seem to be written by an Epicurean who is watching Christianity with approbation. If they are less amusing than Madame du Deffand's, they are also more solid and not so fatiguing to the spirit. But then, unlike that lady, she is never bored and is gifted with an endless curiosity, an endless interest in fact. Her flirtation by correspondence with Pope was probably as great a piece of vanity as that of Madame du Deffand with Horace Walpole; but it was more abstract and better disciplined. In all her letters, but especially in those to him, she is mistress of classical description and of a precision which is refreshing. The modern quality of humour, of seeing things through a personal atmosphere, was as unknown as it would have been repugnant to her. She never paints, she engraves; and her best accounts are like intaglios, clear-cut and excellently designed. She is a scholar even in her frivolities, and there is the same nicety in her account of a rakish card-party as in her sober pictures of Oriental scenes.

She writes to Pope from Belgrade in 1717:

'This place . . . perfectly answers the description of the Elysian Fields. I am in the middle of a wood consisting chiefly of fruit-trees watered by a vast number of fountains . . . and divided into many shady walks upon short grass. . . . The village is only inhabited by the richest among the Christians, who meet every night at a fountain, forty

paces from my house, to sing and dance. But what persuades me more fully of my decease is the situation of my own mind, the profound ignorance I am in of what passes among the living (which only comes to me by chance), and the great calmness with which I receive it. Yet I have still a hankering after my friends and acquaintances left in the world. . . . And 'tis very necessary to make a perfect Elysium that there should be a River Lethe, which I am not so happy as to find. . . . The reflection on the great gulph between you and me cools all news that comes hither. I can neither be sensibly touched with joy nor grief when I consider that possibly the cause of either is removed before the letter comes to my hands.'

This is admirable of the academic kind, the charm of which lies in the absence of strong contrasts. Lady Mary never sinks below cheerfulness, or gets beyond the 'sprightly folly' she 'thanks God she was born with.' Perhaps the art of aphorism suits her best of all. 'Our proverb that knowledge is no burden may be true as to oneself,' she writes, 'but knowing too much is apt to make one troublesome to other people.' Or, 'We are little better than straws upon the water; we may flatter ourselves that we swim, when the current carries us along.' Or, 'Does not King David say somewhere that man walketh in a vain show?' she writes on another occasion; 'I think he does, and I am sure this is peculiarly true of the Frenchman; but he walks merrily and seems to enjoy the vision, and may he not therefore be esteemed more happy than many of our solid thinkers, whose brows are furrowed by deep reflection, and whose wisdom is so often clothed with a rusty mantle of spleen and vapours?'

If Lady Mary was born scholarly and classical, Dorothy Osborne, her predecessor by sixty years, was born classical and natural. The daughter of a Cavalier and plighted to a Roundhead's son, she has about her style a kind of sober

grace which seems to express her relation to both parties. Besides, she lived within hail of the Elizabethans, and her words 'have the dew still upon them.' She is a dainty preacher, and nurses wisdom with a kind of maternal tenderness; the thoughts that she sends forth from the lonely Bedfordshire home, where she tends a sick father and pacifies a quarrelsome brother, are scented with lavender. There can be no more pleasant contrast than that between Lady Mary's Ottoman Elysium and Dorothy Osborne's English Arcadia. 'About six or seven o'clock,' she writes, 'I walk out into a common that lies hard by the house, where a great many young wenches keep sheep and cows, and sit in the shade singing of ballads. I talk to them, and find they want nothing to make them the happiest people in the world but the knowledge that they are so. Most commonly, when we are in the midst of our discourse, one looks about her and spies her cows going into the corn, and then away they all run, as if they had wings at their heels.'

But Dorothy Osborne really belongs to the intimate letter-writers and wrote for one eye alone—that of her betrothed, Sir William Temple. Her letters, properly speaking, form part of the most personal of all provinces, that of love-letters and letters of sentiment; but she writes as a wife rather than as a lover, and this is as well for the reader. *Égoïsme à deux* is as unallowable and as tedious in correspondence as it is in society, and the most charming letters are those that introduce us to a hospitable and friendly circle. Dorothy Osborne was at once too modest and too observant to be guilty of egoism. She liked to know many people of different kinds, and described, or rather suggested them with a pretty humour of her own. Her mind has an English climate, and though her pages are rich in tender expressions of love, they still keep the temperate sweetness of an English landscape. She reminds us of one of Shakespeare's gentler heroines, in whom devo-

tion and fidelity take the place of passion, and playfulness that of spirits. ' 'Tis not that I am sad,' she says, ' I thank God I have no occasion to be so, but I never appear to be very merry, and if I had all I could wish for in the world I do not think it would make any visible change in my humour.'

If we want a more fervid feeling we must go to France in the last century; the letters of Madame d'Épinay, for instance, are a Journal of Sensibility, though not of Despair. We shall find that quality in the letters of Héloïse to Abélard—in 1131—terrible and beautiful in their concentration; or if we seek chronicles less remote, there are the correspondences of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, once Madame du Deffand's 'companion,' or of Madame Desbordes Valmore in our own day. Letters of passion should never be collected in a volume, and not more than two or three from the same person should be read, for passion is naturally monotonous. The death song of the swan is a beautiful thing, but when he goes on singing *ad infinitum* without dying, it becomes tiresome. The right medium for the expression of passion is poetry, which arrests thought and feeling at white heat and crystallises it, compelling it to brevity. Madame Desbordes Valmore's love poems, for example, are much finer interpretations of love than her letters on the same theme, which are so intense as to become oppressive.

As far as style goes, the love letters of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse to M. Guibert may be taken as a model of eloquence and of fiery grace. She is in turns reckless and restrained, and there is something splendid—something of the grand manner—in the way she risks herself, in her prodigal and daring simplicity. 'Cette âme de feu et de douleur, c'est votre création,' she writes to her lover; 'l'esprit trouve des mots, l'âme aurait besoin de trouver une langue nouvelle.' But with the best will in the world one is wearied by these pages of egoism—*égoïsme à une* in this case—and it is difficult to sympathise with a woman

who kept a pair of passions ; who was broken-hearted about her first love (then dying of consumption) when she adopted her second, to whom all these letters (one hundred and eighty in two years) were addressed.

There is another kind of personal confession, often as self-centred as the love letter, but deeper and of far wider interest—the letter of religious experience. It is dangerous to remove the spiritual from the realms of the imagination to those of colloquial prose and colloquial imagery, where materialism too often overtakes it, as evangelical correspondences abundantly testify. It would perhaps be better if religious letters also could be turned into poetry, or at least written by poets. Eugénie de Guérin, whose poems deserve to be better known, has given us letters which fulfil this condition, and show us how graceful, how hospitable religion can be ; pages rich in spiritual delicacy, and therefore impossible to quote from without injuring them. It is equally difficult to cite the correspondence of Madame Guyon, the reactionary saint of Louis XIV.'s reign, not because it is too subtle, but because it is too rhapsodical. It is full of startling effects, for she was a mystic of intense inward vision, and therefore a realist about the unreal, and over-familiar with the invisible.

Madame Swetchine and Caroline Fox should hardly be reckoned amongst religious letter-writers, although they wrote religiously. Both lived on the borderland of religion, but their atmosphere is more intellectual than that of the religious world, and their intellect was foremost in the search after truth. The writer really representing this sort of metaphysical correspondence is Sara Coleridge, who inherited her father's voracity for abstraction even in doctrine. Her letters can scarcely be called letters—they are treatises ; far from falling into Madame Guyon's error, they make even the visible invisible and obscure it by a fog of speculation.

The history of letter-writing would make an interesting volume ; like the history of comedy it is practically that of society, and a good letter is an epitome of civilisation. The letter of feeling, whether of passion or religion, is the most primitive expression of the art, as Abélard and Héloïse testify ; and it is only as family grows and expands into social life that amusing letters become possible. The Paston letters in Caxton's time are the first, and there are others that date from Elizabethan days and abound in Elizabethan grace ; but their interest is mostly historical, and they do little to disclose character. The personal letter can only come later, when personality has room to develop and culture has affected women as well as men. Nearly all the letter-writing of women is due to the last hundred and fifty years, and during that period they have written every kind of letter, excepting that of whims and crotchets, for which their minds are perhaps too constant ; a Charles Lamb, an Edward FitzGerald, has never yet been translated into the feminine. The most difficult letter to write, and the one generally best unwritten, is certainly the letter on Nature. The Lake school, including Dorothy Wordsworth, were alone adequate to it. Since their time one or two others have partially succeeded, but on the whole who would not exclaim with Mrs. Carlyle : ' Oh, my dear ! if "all about feelings" be bad in a letter, all about scenery and no feelings is a deal worse ! ' . . . ' Such a letter,' she goes on, ' as I received from you yesterday, after much half anxious, half angry waiting for, will read charmingly in your biography, and may be quoted in Murray's *Guide Book* ; but for "me, as one solitary individual," I was not charmed with it at all.'

Mrs. Carlyle, at any rate, could not have existed in any century but her own, any more than the sort of *human* letter which she creates for us. She inverts Jeffrey's advice to young writers, ' If you think you have a good thing to

say don't say it,' for she never thinks she has a good thing to say, and always says it. More almost than any other woman letter-writer she has humour, the most personal of all qualities and the most modern, for it grows with our taste for character-study and our sense of life's incongruities. Too many things have already been said about humour and its relation to wit, but thus much may, perhaps, be hazarded here: humour is an atmosphere of the mind; humour is colour, wit is form; humour has to do with the character, wit with the head. Madame du Deffand and Lady Mary wrote letters essentially witty; Mrs. Carlyle does not so often condense her humour into wit, but she can do so whenever she wishes. She writes on one occasion that she is not up to visitors, not even to '*an angel awares*,' like G., and one might quote a dozen more of her racy phrases. Humorous description, however, is what she enjoys, and the peculiar flavour of her humour is that it attaches itself mostly to the limitations of existence and to minute domestic drawbacks. 'She is not what is called a thorough servant,' she says of one of her many 'generals,' 'but that will be no objection to signify, as I am not a thorough lady, which Grace Macdonald defined to be "one who had not entered her own kitchen for seven years."'

Nothing can be more succinct than her humour, and yet no letters seem more haphazard—it is one of their chief charms. The fact is she was a great artist in her own way, and her power of selection was instinctive,—a much more finished production than when it is artificial. She was quite as good a housekeeper of her wits as of her home. 'It is not only a faculty with me,' she says, 'but a necessity of my nature to make a great deal out of nothing.' Her thrift is like that of the bee; she darts into the centre of each subject she touches, and returns with its honey packed into the smallest possible space. She can be bold, too, and vivid in a large way when she attempts large subjects,

as, for instance, in her description of Father Mathew's Temperance Meeting in the East End; and, like most humorists, she can be sentimental—none more so.

'Blessed be the inventor of photography!' she writes; 'I set him above even the inventor of chloroform. It has given more positive pleasure to poor suffering humanity than anything that has "cast up" in my time, or is like to, this art by which even the "poor" can possess themselves of tolerable likenesses of their absent dear ones. And mustn't it be acting favourably on the morality of the country? I assure you I have often gone into my own room in the devil's own humour—ready to swear at "things in general" and some things in particular—and, my eyes resting by chance on one of my photographs of long-ago places or people, a crowd of sad gentle thoughts has rushed into my heart, and driven the devil out, as clean as ever so much holy water and priestly exorcisms could have done.'

Here, as elsewhere, Mrs. Carlyle just falls short of the poetic; the sense of poetry was the one mental equipment she did not possess, and if she had possessed it she would oftener have been able to look beyond the moment. 'You are the most concrete woman I have ever known, Jane,' a friend once said to her; and 'concrete,' not 'matter of fact,' is the word which expresses her.

The same epithet might, with equal justice, be applied to another letter-writer and another 'Jane'—Jane Austen. In some ways she may be compared to Mrs. Carlyle. Her mind also enjoys playing upon the limitations and inconveniences of daily existence with sustained vivacity. But in her case, form, neatness, and occasionally wit are more prominent than humorous description. She had not so rich a nature as Mrs. Carlyle, and needed her own creations to bring out her full brilliance. Her letters are sprightly but rather cold chronicles of family plans, illnesses, meals, acquaintances—here and there enriched by flashes of fun

and epigram and by the almost imperceptible threads of her cobweb malice, in which she caught so many buzzing flies. She is perfect in the art of implication, and nobody can *imply* a bore as mercilessly as she does. 'A widower with three children,' she writes, 'has no right to look higher than his daughter's governess'; 'I am forced to be abusive for want of subject, having really nothing to say.' Here are a few of her nothings: 'Charles Powlett has been very ill, but is getting well again. His wife is discovered to be everything that the neighbourhood could wish for, silly and cross as well as extravagant.' 'At the bottom of the Kingsdown Hill we met a gentleman in a buggy who, on minute examination, turned out to be Dr. Hall, in such very deep mourning that either his mother, his wife, or himself must be dead.' 'We had a Miss North and a Mr. Gould of our party; the latter walked home with me after tea. He is a very young man, just entered Oxford, wears spectacles, and has heard that *Evelina* was written by Dr. Johnson.'

Miss Austen seldom shows her sweeter side in her letters, but, when she does, her sweetness has a brilliance which gives it a charming distinction. Most of them were written to her beloved sister Cassandra, during their yearly separations. If they are sometimes monotonous in their detail, they certainly have the virtue of absolute spontaneity. Nobody could detect a genius in them, still less the genius of the family. There are few letters from famous women of which this can be said. Those of Charlotte Brontë and Mrs. Browning are indeed equally unconscious; but Miss Brontë's letters are more characteristic of the whole woman than Miss Austen's—of her passion and her austerity—while in Mrs. Browning's we are aware of the poet, beside the lovable companion.

There is a very different sort of letter written by the great—more edifying and less intimate—which, for want of a better term, may be called the Sibylline letter. Madame de

Staël was probably its first parent, but she is too much of a Muse to be reckoned with, and George Sand is the High Priestess who has given us the best of such oracles, a High Priestess rich in human love for human correspondents. Beautiful thoughts on Life and Death and Immortality, tender wisdom, eloquent political outbursts and pleadings for freedom—such is the poetry in prose which makes up her correspondence. It is unsatisfactory to give fragments of it, and her letters should be read as wholes. The same cannot be said of George Eliot's correspondence, for she is a Sibyl too deeply versed in German philosophy, too much weighed down by the responsibilities of utterance, to make a letter-writer. It is often the Minor Prophetesses who have the finer turn for expression—Fanny Kemble, for instance, whose letters frequently have the Delphic ring. But they are always natural, always abundant, and enrich us with the wealth of her varied experience.

There is one large region of letter-writing which remains to be touched on, a region which lies between the unconscious intimate letter and the conscious literary one, and partakes of both ; this is the world of social letters, and social letters are identical with the graceful correspondence of the eighteenth century in England. It was the only time when our reserved island could boast of an outburst of letter-writing. French influence, French expression, and travels in France were then the fashion, and no doubt intercourse with our neighbours schooled our taste and taught us to formulate more readily. The practice of letter-writing was almost as universal as in Madame du Deffand's France, and much less self-conscious than in her circles. Like their French contemporaries, too, these English letters are typical rather than individual. If one had to express them by a single comprehensive epithet, one would choose the word 'sprightly.' 'Sprightly' often rises to 'brilliant,' and that not only in the best hands. The great Hannah More, Miss Burney, and

Mrs. Piozzi amaze us by the vitality of their pens ; but many of the less known ladies, Maria Holroyd and Mrs. Boscawen in particular, are not far behind, and there does not seem to be one of them who was guilty of a dull page. They always write letters ' of the news sort,' never of ' the inner-woman sort '—purely external chronicles of external things described with animation and intelligence.

Most of the charmers of that time knew the same people and had the same tastes as well as the same style, so that it is often hard for the reader to tell one from another. Beside the Drums and Routs, the quizzings and scandals, and all the gay bustle which go on in their correspondence, it is also full of the fashionable curiosity about travellers and remote facts from foreign lands. ' Miss Harris, I hope,' writes one lady, ' will tell you next winter how she skaited [*sic*] through the northern climate almost to every Court over frozen seas.' Miss Harris and her ' skaiting ' were doubtless discussed in twenty drawing-rooms, over twenty cups of bohea. Those were elegant days, when the object of life was ' to be entertained,' and even Captain Cook and his savages were described elegantly ; days so elegant, indeed, that we find one of Hannah More's feminine correspondents anxious to address her as Hercules, but refraining on the score of delicacy.

All these writers belonged to distinguished circles, and the real value of their letters lies in their familiar pictures of great men and of great events. Their pages are pages of history, and as such they should be read. The presentation of some striking scene shows them, perhaps, at their best ; such, for example, as the trial of Warren Hastings, which Hannah More witnessed. ' Poor Hastings,' she wrote, ' sitting and looking so meek, to hear himself called " villain " and " cut-throat." . . . The orator (Edmund Burke) was seized with a spasm . . . and I did not know whether he might not have died in the exertion of his powers, like Chatham.'

‘Mrs.’ More’s correspondence is not nearly so well known as Miss Burney’s, and yet, though its writer is not so attractive, it is quite as sparkling and representative. No one had better matter for her letters. Until her conversion in early middle age, she led a life as brilliant as it was possible for a Sabbatarian to lead ; and a great deal of brilliance can be put into six days out of seven. She spent several months of each year with the Garricks—who adored her—met everybody of interest, and spent her nights, as she tells us, ‘raking it’ in a hackney coach with Dr. Johnson, or hearing him talk at Sir Joshua’s. She was a thorough bluestocking and much enjoyed stately *badinage* with Bishops, or Gothic compliments from periwigged divines.

Blow, blow, my sweetest rose,
For Hannah More will soon be here !

so writes the learned Dr. Langhorne to her, and her letters to him are as liturgically flirtatious as he could desire. Her correspondence does not show much change even after her conversion, for she was one of those fortunate people who can regard their social position as a Means of Grace, and the more she used it the holier she felt. When a couple of illustrious Turks came to visit her, she writes, they sat down on the carpet and tried to convert her to the Koran, in return for which attention she pressed White’s Sermons upon them. It is true she had some passing qualms about Horace Walpole’s free-thought, but she continued her witty budgets to him on the chance of their effecting his reform—unlike her French rival, who would have written for the opposite purpose. The sincere Evangelicalism of this busy and popular Pharisee makes her letters rather distincter, perhaps also more amusing, than those of her amiable compeers ; and her copious sheets to her courtiers, who were often of her own sex, can be safely recommended as excellent company for a solitary evening by the fire.

The publication of family correspondence has lately come into vogue, and it is to be hoped it may continue. We have had the private letters of the Verney family, and also those of the Newdegate ladies, first in the time of Elizabeth, then in the time of the Georges.¹ These simple communications from unknown people make quite as valuable a chapter in social history as the letters of celebrities ; more so, perhaps, because they are not brilliant and only give us a picture of comfortable average people. Public spirit is a rare and may be a conceited quality ; as a motive for correspondence it is, at any rate, impossible. But how charming would it be if, from any motive whatever, more members of more families would write full chronicles of their doings—and if other members would keep them ! The clothes, the walks, the jam-making—even the jam-eating—of a hundred years ago are vitally interesting. It requires, of course, much greater self-suppression to figure namelessly as one of many correspondents than to write a novel, the unfailing vent for every young lady with a pen. But then there is this compensation : a letter is bound to give pleasure at least to one, but there is no such certainty about a novel.

The qualities too which mar a book may often make a letter ; and letter-writing is the legitimate channel for immediate expression, of which women feel so much greater a need than men. Then it is a craft which is peculiarly adapted to a woman's avocations and the life of little interruptions which usually falls to her lot. There is no solemn thread of Fate to spin when we take up our correspondence—no thread, indeed, that we may not comfortably lose, and find again half an hour later. Letter-writing has another advantage : it fulfils the first condition of any feminine occupation ; it includes men and admits of all the finer shades of their relations to women. It is an interesting

¹ *Gossip from a Muniment Room* and *The Cheverels of Cheverel Manor*, both edited by Lady Newdegate.

question whether women write best to men or to women, and one which either sex will probably settle differently. It is evident enough that men write best to women, for women alone have power to draw out their tenderer side—to make them most themselves. But, excepting in love-letters, it is just this side which disappears when women write to men ; chameleon-like, they try to write from the brain, to condense more, to become less personal, and consequently least themselves. Such letters are more artistic than those they send to each other, but they have not the frankness and vitality that these possess. Lady Mary is nicer when she writes to her sister or daughter than when she writes to Pope ; and Mrs. Carlyle reveals herself more vividly in her letters to her Scottish women friends than in those to Sterling and to Forster.

However that may be, a paper such as this can have but one ending, a plea for the Employment of the Pen. Everybody knows the reasons against it. There is no School of Art where we can all learn it and take ourselves seriously ; there is no leisure ; and there *are* newspapers, railway trains, high pressure—those often-quoted lions in the way. But, after all, there is a constant demand for the revival of other and less useful crafts—handlooms, lace-making, and the like. Why not then for that of letter-writing, which cannot fail, as these do, because of insufficient funds ? There is no real reason why the women of to-day should not produce as good letters as their great-grandmothers, and every reason why they should. And if they have grown too far-seeing to write for the moment and need a nobler purpose, let them write for the poor unamused ‘ unborn generations ’ who will have nothing but postcards to divert them. (1899.)

A FRENCH GOVERNESS

THE race of governesses is now almost extinct, driven out by the invading hordes of university teachers. The governess of the last generation—the lady born in Central Germany and offended about many things—she who taught the glorious motions of the universe by means of an orange and a knitting-needle—is fast disappearing from the planet that she dealt with thus intimately. If only there were time and space to write about every interesting subject, some one might give us a remarkable book on the Evolution of Governesses. It is a more fruitful theme than would at first sight appear, for governesses have gone through many periods. They seem to have begun in France, where, as early as the fifteenth century, we read of the Court Chaperone or ‘Gouvernante,’ who superintended the ‘Chamber of the Damsels’ and never left them except at the approach of their confessor. She taught no more than intricate needlework and the proprieties, existed nowhere outside the Court, and was but the rudest foreshadowing of the ladies who succeeded her some two hundred years later. For the heyday of governesses—their zenith of opportunity—was in the France of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the France that produced Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Genlis, Madame de Campan. These names—at any rate, the first two—prove that there have been immortal governesses as well as immortal poets; and it is fitting that France, the home of deportment, should have been their birthplace.

Madame de Maintenon was so much made of in her life-

time that posterity owes her nothing, and is perhaps justified in behaving somewhat coldly to her memory. Love it would be difficult to give her : amazed curiosity and admiration of her dignity and her distinction are the warmest feelings that she inspires, whether as the toiling wife and secretary of the scholar Scarron, the Court Governess, the Mother of the Church, the Abbess of St. Cyr, or the consort and widow of the King.

‘There is nothing so agreeable as to make oneself esteemed,’ she once wrote to her brother ; and Sainte-Beuve, with his customary insight, puts her character into a nutshell when he says that she was ‘always occupied with others and never loved them.’ Like him, we feel her charm while we are reading her letters ; but directly we shut the book the charm disappears. Still a life of consistent self-sacrifice and self-discipline, with self in the guise of influence as its object, is rare enough to command our respect ; and so does her strong but fastidious will, which was not content with gaining whatever it strove for, unless it achieved its purpose in the best possible taste.

Her story reads like a political fairy tale. She was born in a Poitou prison in 1635. Her father, son of the great Calvinist, D’Aubigné, was a rake and a ne’er-do-weel, his father’s despair—a political and aristocratic Micawber who was never out of a scrape. Her mother, on the other hand, was a *dévôte* and a Stoic, with fine practical faculties—a stern fidelity to duty—and real depth, though little grace, of heart. She was glad to place the baby Françoise with her Huguenot sister-in-law, Madame de Villette, who brought up the child in the Reformed faith till she was seven years old. Then she returned home, an eager little Protestant, willing to take the maternal buffets for non-observance of Catholic rites in the spirit of a martyr.

About this time the family migrated to La Martinique, in the West Indies, where for several years she was educated

rather severely on scant means and Plutarch's *Lives*. It is a relief to hear that once, when the house caught fire, and her mother was anxious to save the books, she was found crying for her doll and its toy bed. She began very early to have adventures in the grand style. Once, on the journey out, she fell ill, was said to have died, and was just about to be lowered into the sea when her mother, clasping her for the last time, felt a faint movement that convinced her of life. Another time she was miraculously saved from a serpent. When she was about eleven her father died penniless; and his wife and children returned to France, the mother to engage in a lawsuit about a family estate, the little girl to return to Madame de Villette and become a stauncher Protestant than before. This was put an end to by her mother's sister, Madame de Neuillant, a bigoted Catholic, who procured an order from Anne of Austria to remove her from heretical influences and take her into her own care. This lady, who lived on her country estate and was very rich, combined a rather sour religion with provincial parsimony, and used her niece as a servant. Madame de Maintenon tells us she was sent every morning into the fields in a peasant's dress, to look after the turkeys—work pleasant enough if she had not been obliged to wear a mask for her complexion's sake, and to carry a volume of Pibrac's elegant quatrains to learn by heart. She did menial jobs in the *basse-cour* also, quite unconverted meanwhile, till her exasperated aunt ended by sending her to an Ursuline convent in Poitou. She was eventually converted at fourteen in a Paris nunnery of the same sisterhood, after obstinate discussions with eminent divines. And a little later she returned home, to live first with her poverty-stricken mother and then with Madame de Neuillant. It was the latter who introduced her to the paralysed Abbé Scarron, scholar, sufferer, wit, buffoon, who had expressed a desire to see 'la jeune Indienne,' or 'la belle Indienne,' as

she was subsequently called. When she entered the room, full of brilliant guests, and met their stare of curiosity, she became conscious that her stuff frock—the only one that her aunt allowed her—was far too short, and she burst into tears. This was perhaps the most impulsive action of her life ; perhaps, too, the only occasion on which her vanity was wounded.

She could not have begun better (though this time her cleverness was unconscious) than by inviting the compassion rather than the jealousy of wits, and she soon became intimate with the Scarron circle. Not for long, however ; for when she was about fifteen she was obliged to accompany her mother, whose affairs compelled her to retire to the country ; and shortly afterwards Madame d'Aubigné died there, broken down and almost starving. The girl remained where she was, for several months, alone, and practically destitute but for the Abbé Scarron's letters. At the end of the fourth month (she was sixteen) he wrote and begged her to marry him : an offer which she promptly accepted, because, as she afterwards admitted, acceptance was better than going into a convent.

'The poor cripple' was the phrase with which in later days she designated her husband, and it expresses her whole attitude towards him—faithful, attentive, cold, and indefatigable. It was not even compassionate, for she disapproved of the jester's mask under which he persistently hid his bodily distress. She made herself his secretary (he was one of the first men of letters in Paris), and often wrote all day for him, trying, as she takes care to inform us, to modify the lightness of his language. The cloven hoof—or should we call it the winged sandal?—of her influence began to appear, and she felt sure that with him she had succeeded. He, on the other hand, took pains to initiate her into the habits of the world, and produced her there as if she were some choice edition of one of his favourite classics. He gave her great opportunities. All the best

people of the time frequented his house, the grand folk and the literary ones : Ninon de l'Enclos, the Richelieus and Albrets, Madame de Sévigné, Lafontaine, Mademoiselle de Scudéry, the charming Madame de Sablière. Madame Scarron at once took her place among them. She was witty, she was tactful, she was tall ; she had a beautiful figure, chestnut hair, a brilliant complexion, and the most speaking black eyes in the world—so says Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who described her under the name of 'Lyriane.' Added to this, she had a certain reserve and a conventual charm which made her seem more piquant to this world of fashion. These would have availed her less, however, had she not possessed the invaluable social qualities of gaiety and good sense—supreme good sense, we may say. The quality of gaiety, Sainte-Beuve remarks, is the one which as her readers we do not recognise ; a good deal of the charm she exercised over her contemporaries was no doubt due to it, and would have gone far to soften the pontifical manner of her writings. 'Gay by nature, sad by circumstances,' she said of herself later, in her Court days ; and the 'nature' was probably more conspicuous in her youth.

Curiously enough, of all the galaxy whom she entertained, it was Ninon de l'Enclos who took her up the most warmly. 'Elle était trop gauche pour l'amour,' said Henry iv.'s dowager mistress of Louis xiv.'s future wife ; and this may possibly have been the secret of the elder lady's friendship for the younger. In spite of this, Mademoiselle de l'Enclos tried to blacken Madame Scarron by insinuations about her friendship with her husband's friend, Villarceaux, though even Ninon said she had no real proof of her guilt, and there is no reason to credit this single accusation against her. She herself—and how she would have gloried in a conquered temptation !—alludes to this period as free from passion and from any moral trial.

She went on writing gay and often improper epistles in

verse at her husband's dictation, till his death left her, at twenty-five, an attractive and almost penniless widow. After much delay, a pension was obtained for her from the King; but meanwhile she had no lack of friends. Madame de Richelieu, most fastidious of great ladies, adopted her as one of the family, and she lodged near the Richelieu Hotel. The Maréchal and Maréchale d'Albret hastened to show her an equal affection; all her acquaintance followed suit. She had, as in later days she was particular to impress on the young ladies at St. Cyr, a special talent for making herself invaluable in a household. In her lecture to the 'Classe Bleue' on how to make oneself loved, she gives the recipe on which she acted: never to talk of oneself, always to discover—if possible, to forestall—the wants of others, to be pleased with everything and turn one's hand to any task, to expect nothing and resent no neglect: all the Christian duties, in fact, performed from motives of good taste. The discipline of taste is perhaps severer, drier, less rewarded, than the discipline of religion; and it needed something like sweetness, at any rate a large amenity, to enable her to practise her precepts. But she possessed, in a still greater degree, an instinct for calculation, which, in her case, amounted to genius. All through her life it was her creed that, failing the religious motive, the desire for reputation was as good as any other and ought to be earnestly cultivated. Years afterwards, when she was over seventy, she told the same pupils at St. Cyr that at this early time in her career she performed her deeds of virtue—even nursed a poor man through the smallpox—from no love of God, but because she wished her goodness to be different from that of other people. She actually records that on one occasion she deliberately made herself ill, and then went out to pay a visit—in the hope that she would hear her friends exclaim, 'What a courageous woman!'—but she only ended in feeling so faint that she had to beat a hasty retreat.

The restraint she imposed on herself was the more surprising because she had a brilliant tongue which loved to amuse—and did amuse till 1666, when first she came into contact with the Abbé Gobelin, the man who became her Director, and occupied that post for the greater part of her Court life. Till then she had not been devout; but his subtle, courtly religion kindled her faith, and one of the first spiritual exercises he prescribed for her was ‘to make herself a bore to others.’ One cannot but admire the fortitude with which she, the centre of her circle, sat silent in the midst of coruscating gossip, social and intellectual, till her silence told, and the talk slackened: she saw her friends yawning round her and knew that it was owing to her dulness.

It was about this time, before the long-demanded pension had been granted, that poverty had forced her to accept the invitation of her friend, the Queen of Portugal, formerly *Princesse de Nemours*, to accompany her to the Portuguese Court. She was anxious before her departure to gratify one wish, to see the new Court beauty, *Madame de Montespan*, who was talked of as a wonder of the world. *Maiselle d’Heudicourt* offered to present her, and the introduction was achieved. *Madame de Montespan*, much charmed by her homage, deplored her desertion of France; *Madame Scarron* told her the reason and how her pension had been delayed. ‘I will speak to the King myself,’ exclaimed *Madame de Montespan*, and she was as good as her word. The King was testy. ‘*Encore la Veuve Scarron*,’ he said; and when we think of the indefinite extension of that ‘*Encore*,’ it seems as if the irony of life had spoken for him. For *Madame de Montespan* also the pension was ensured—*Madame Scarron* stayed in France at her intervention—her own hand had forged the sword that was to kill her. It was she too who, when the time came, thought of the widow as a desirable governess for her children. Her

first child was born in 1669, and a governess became necessary. When the post was offered to Madame Scarron, then thirty-five years old, she cautiously said that she would only become the governess of the King's children, and refused to accept it till Louis xiv. himself begged her to. It was no sinecure, and the secrecy alone was worth a large salary. At the birth of each of the four elder children the doctor was blindfolded and did not even know of the King's presence, though on one occasion his Majesty gave him a glass of wine. Madame Scarron, closely masked, received the child and bore it away wrapped in a shawl to Paris. Her house was in the Rue Vaugirard ; and, in order to keep her oath of secrecy, she was obliged to go on with all the rush of her daily life, as nobody was to know of the existence of the children, and any change in her habits might have roused suspicion. No workmen were admitted to repair the house ; she had to supply any need of them herself, plumbing, papering, and painting with her own hands. She was even bled, because she had a habit of blushing and feared it might lead her to betray her charge. As the Montespan family increased, the governess placed them out in different parts of the town, and, muffled in veils, sallied forth every night to visit and superintend each one of them. No detail of their diet, their clothing, the awakening of the infant intelligence, was neglected ; the nurses under her must have worked hard for their living. At first she saw little of the King, who thought her a prude and a bluestocking, and did not like her. But later when the firstborn (who died) had been succeeded by the little Duc de Maine, the Duc de Vexin, and Mademoiselle de Nantes, the children were legitimised : the secrecy was over, and she brought the Duc de Maine to Court.

The little boy adored her and hardly knew his mother. It was not long before Madame Scarron found out that Madame de Montespan was jealous, had a temper, and loved

'scenes.' She made them on every occasion with her governess, whom she envied, dreaded, and found indispensable. 'For God's sake, do not make any of your great eyes at me !' she once exclaimed to Madame Scarron, who, no doubt, was as provoking as calm people know how to be. The quarrels were reported to the King by his mistress, and Madame Scarron complains of being constantly misrepresented. From rather disliking her as 'Your Bel Esprit' (his manner of alluding to her), Louis XIV. came to regard her as a queer-tempered person who had to be humoured. The first thing that made him change his mind was a day he spent alone with her pupil, the Duc de Maine, whose wit and reason reflected credit on his teacher. It was about this time that Madame de Montespan employed Madame Scarron to write for her one of her daily notes to the King. He at once perceived the difference, and from that moment sought occasions for corresponding with the governess of his children. Not long after, he entered Madame de Montespan's apartments in the middle of a dispute between the two ladies. He asked the cause. Madame de Montespan was sobbing too violently to inform him. Madame Scarron, as composed as a statue, begged him to step into the next room, where she gave him her version and said she must resign her situation. It may have been at this interview that the King defended his mistress by dwelling on her sensibility, which was so great that she wept at tales of generous deeds. But in the end Madame Scarron impressed him with her sincerity. He implored her to stay, and she consented.

For some time her tyrant had been moving the King to give his governess a pension, that she might buy an estate and retire from Court ; and now he acceded to the request. He gave Madame Scarron a sum large enough to enable her to buy the estate of Maintenon (the name which, after the purchase, she adopted as her own) ; but she remained

at her post, and the King very sensibly avoided further complications by sending her off to the Baths of Barèges with the crippled Duc de Maine. This was the beginning of an era. On the journey, she wrote that she was receiving letters 'from one man alone.' Her triumph was complete when on her return the little boy, who had never been able to walk, limped into his father's room holding her by the hand.

From that time she had ascendancy over the King. We cannot forbear from sympathising with Madame de Montespan, who must have found Louis' new-born taste for the domestic virtues very annoying. There was one famous occasion when, flashing with jewels, she rushed for a moment into the royal nursery to say good-night to her sick children, and found him there in sentimental contemplation of Madame de Maintenon, who, pale and disordered from long watching, was rocking the Duc de Maine on one arm, while with the other hand she soothed the wailing Mademoiselle de Nantes.

In order to measure the new influence on the Great Monarch, we must try to realise his charm. The nature of his morals has perhaps blinded the world to his sense and intellect. He seems to have had a real power in conversation—the power of hitting the nail on the head, of using few words, all of them apt, of delicate discrimination and a brilliant sobriety which never sought for effect; and these qualities, which became more conspicuous as he grew older, found a ready response in Madame de Maintenon. But past fascinations must always remain a mystery, and in her case can only be partly accounted for. The secret of her boundless sway over him lay somewhat in this need of his for mental companionship (a middle-aged mode of flirtation, not unknown to others beside kings); still more, perhaps, in the fact that she was a woman of common sense at a moment when common sense was hard to find—scarcely discoverable in the corrupt Court. 'A King's title,' he

used to say, 'is "Sa Majesté," a Pope's "Sa Sainteté"; Madame de Maintenon's is "Sa Solidité,"' and this was always his name for her.

Her attitude towards her patroness is more difficult to write about. As early as 1674, urged forward by Gobelin and Bossuet, she had resolved on the ousting of Madame de Montespan, or, as she put it, the conversion of the King. In the latter purpose she was quite sincere and devoutly concentrated—single in aim, if not in dealing. She could afford to be mean in the interests of religion, for she was convinced she was the instrument of God—by means of the Archbishops. In her own eyes she was not untrue to a friend: she was sapping an unlawful tie likely to damn her Sovereign here and hereafter, and was bringing him back to the wronged and deserted Queen. Her fervent desire to leave the Court, which she daily expressed to her Director during her first years there, waned after the Montespan's disgrace, and vanished altogether with the Queen's death.

In all this there was an overweening love of power and of affairs—especially Church affairs—and a grand passion for the King's salvation, the King's position, the King's training: for everything, it would seem, but the King's self. Or, if she loved him (and the same may be said of her rival feeling for the Church), it was with the almost extravagant adulation of a governess for her pupil after he has grown up, when she still regards him as her handiwork.

The plot of Bossuet and the priests against Madame de Montespan first took effect in 1675, when one of them refused to give her Communion at the Easter Festival. Louis broke with her, for a time only; and the next five years were made up of such breaks and returns. It was during one of these that the poor creature, devoured by fright and superstition, went with Madame de Maintenon to a fortune-teller in Paris, who prophesied her fall, but, turning to her com-

panion, declared that she would mount high—a saying which did not improve Madame de Maintenon's relations with her mistress. But the more Madame de Montespan hated her, the less could she do without her. Presents were showered on her daily, and they remained together 'arm-in-arm, but not loving each other the better for that' (as Madame de Maintenon wrote on one occasion), till the King's final separation from his mistress in 1680—when Madame de Maintenon's lips conveyed the fatal verdict. And this was only brought about (after interludes of several minor loves) by the appearance of a new star, Mademoiselle de Fontanges, 'sotte comme un panier et belle comme un ange.' Not too 'sotte' to administer a snub to Madame de Maintenon, who tried to wean her from her sins. 'You talk of putting off a passion, Madame, as if it were a coat,' she observed—and went on as before. 'The King,' said the enraged Montespan to Madame de Maintenon, 'keeps three mistresses: me nominally; that creature actually; and you from inclination.' Madame de Maintenon, meanwhile, went about from one mistress to the other, exhorting and persuading them. After a year Mademoiselle retired to a convent, and then at last Sa Solidité triumphed. She restored the King to the devoted Queen, who lavished gratitude upon her; and the Dauphin's marriage, soon after, enabled Royalty to appoint her as the Dauphine's 'Dame de l'atour,' a post of importance. The little Duc de Maine was now ten years old and consigned to the care of a tutor; but the governess, unable to resign her sceptre—she never wielded a rod—turned her attention to training the tutor, who must have been blessed with a patient temper, and to forming the young Duke's style by correspondence.

She was much taken up with her countless philanthropies—the founding of industries on her Maintenon estate, the supervision of workpeople—more especially with her poor

girls' orphanage at Neuilly, which was now under the courtly care of her great friend, Madame de Brinon. But ever foremost she was working at the King's further salvation—at obtaining for him the highest place in the New Jerusalem.

He now no longer pretended he could do without her, and never parted from her. She was mistress of the most delicate art of flattery: she told him his faults—another reason of her charm for him. She even once reproved him for reproving his musketeers on the score of their morals—and he submitted to her censure. 'What it would be to be loved by one who can love so well!' his Majesty exclaimed to her one day with all the sentiment of a cold man; and his platonic were highly favoured by the pious little Queen, who believed in Madame as in a divine institution. The latter accompanied her Sovereign and the Court to Luxembourg, the central point of the war in the Netherlands; after which, in the autumn of '83, they all repaired to Fontainebleau. It was here that the Queen fell ill, and died after three days' illness, causing her husband, he said, the first vexation in twenty-three years of married life. It may be added that he made this victory of tact easy for her by his absence; but this was now forgotten, and for a day or two he was dissolved in grief. Well in sight of Canaan, Madame de Maintenon, for the first time in her Court life, lost her self-control: she was agitated, unstrung, and refused to approach the King till the Duc de la Rochefoucauld pushed her by the arm into the Royal presence with the words, 'This is not the time to leave him, Madame: in his present condition he really wants you.' (This Duke was not the author of the *Maximes*, or one might wonder whether he spoke the words as man or as cynic. There are many of the *Maximes* which might have been the result of a conscientious study of Madame de Maintenon.) She did not meet the King

again for some days, but remained at Fontainebleau in a highly emotional condition, amazing to all who knew her. She walked out daily in the forest, unattended save by a friend, and frequently burst into tears—both of which proceedings were quite unheard of. When she again saw the royal widower, less than a week after the Queen's death, he only rallied her on her sad looks—his had disappeared.

It is supposed that soon after this they were betrothed. She was far too clever a tactician to yield at once, and often sent him away in suspense. 'He easily desponds, but is not repelled,' she wrote of him in one of her letters; and the result justified her policy. They were married in 1684: probably in June. About this date a mysterious Mass was celebrated secretly in the King's apartment at midnight, Madame de Maintenon being the only woman present. Père la Chaise, the King's confessor, was there; and Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, to bless the union; together with Minister Louvois and the Marquis de Montchevreuil, as witnesses, and the royal valet Bontemps, to prepare the altar. There has never been a statement in black and white about her marriage; but she alluded to it in her talks with the Superior of St. Cyr and with the Abbé Choisy; in her letters to her only brother she more than once almost confesses it. The first instance is characteristic: she begs him not to come to Paris, as it will look so strange for them not to meet—and that they cannot do, because of the station in which God has placed her without her seeking. 'I shall never get higher; I am too high already,' she adds. Even on her heights she was not contented. 'Ce serait donc Monsieur le Père que vous voulez?' was her brother's retort to her complaints on one occasion. But he was wrong: she wanted more—a whole hierarchy of angels to acknowledge her position. She obtained partial recognition—the royal children always spoke of her and the King as

the 'Chefs de famille'; Louis openly called her 'Madame'; and a few people, her confessor for one, addressed her in private as 'Votre Majesté.'

She had no bed of roses. Though she did all the work of a queen and more, she had little of a queen's glory and no one was afraid to importune her. The description of her days is almost terrifying. It is interesting to compare it with those she had planned for herself a few years earlier, when she thought of retiring from the Court to Maintenon. Then she was to rise at eight in winter, at seven in summer, and pray for an hour before summoning her women to dress her. After this she was to give the needful interviews to workmen and mercers, and go to church till dinner-time. Two afternoons a week were to be devoted to visits of duty or pleasure, till 10 P.M.; two to receiving visitors until the same hour, when prayers were read with the servants; bed followed at eleven. Of the remaining three days, one was to be taken up with going to see the poor of the parish, another with the local Hôtel-Dieu, the third with the prisons; and the evenings were to be spent alone, working or reading. On the eve of feast-days or of taking Communion she was to see no one—certain private devotions were never to be omitted—she was to wear neither gold nor silver, and the tenth of her income was to be dedicated to the poor. This was her scheme, and she defined it as the rudiments of a pious life.

Very different is the day she describes in 1705 to Madame Glapion, her confidante at St. Cyr. She rises at cock-crow for Mass and private devotions, for people begin to crowd her room at half-past seven: first, the King's physicians, followed by the royal valet; then the ministers, the Archbishop, the young dukes and princes, each remaining till some one superior in rank arrives. Everybody leaves when the King appears, and he remains till he goes to Mass. All this time she is not yet dressed: 'If I were,' she says, 'I

should not have had time for my prayers. I am still, therefore, in my nightcap; but my room, notwithstanding, is just like a church.' After Mass the King returns; then comes the Duchess of Burgundy with a company of ladies, who stay while Madame dines. Her digestion is impaired by the conduct of the indiscreet duchess who treads on everybody's toes, or else by her confidences about her domestic unhappiness. The general 'strife of minds . . . unlike anything else' disturbs her, and she is so hemmed in by ladies that she can get nothing to drink. At last the world goes off to dinner, and she is left with her two invalid friends, Madame d'Heudicourt and Madame de Dangeau. This might be a free time for amusement, 'for chat or for a game of backgammon'; but the Dauphin takes that hour for his own, and 'is the most difficult man in the world to entertain, for he never says a word.' After dinner, 'the King and the whole royal family come into my room and make it frightfully hot.' The King departs after half an hour's talk; but the rest remain to tell the last scandal, ignorant that their hostess is full of far graver subjects, State affairs and the like, which often depress her. When they quit her there arrives a file of ladies, one by one, friends and foes, to confide their troubles and beg for her influence with the King. And when he comes back from hunting, he goes straight to her—'the door is shut and no one comes in again.' They are alone together, and she must amuse him. 'Sometimes he is subject to fits of uncontrolled weeping; at others he is unwell. There is no conversation.' Presently ministers and courtiers arrive, often with bad news that prevent her sleeping at night. If the King does not need her, she goes a little apart and uses this time for prayer. Afterwards she sups off fruit and meat, which, for fear she should be wanted, she eats hurriedly, though hurrying always makes her ill. By this time it is late;

I have [she says] been up ever since six in the morning, and have not had time to breathe all day. I am worn out, I have fits of yawning; and, more than all the rest, I begin to feel the effects of age.

Louis bids her go to bed—she complies. Her women come to undress her; but either the King wants to speak to her, or a minister is waiting and Louis is afraid her women may hear.

This puts him out and me too. . . . At last I am in my bed and my women are sent away. Then the King draws near, and sits down at the head of the bed. . . . There is no one there whom I can ask to give me what I need. Sometimes I want some clothes to be aired; but there is no woman present. . . . Sometimes, when I have had a very severe cold, I have been nearly suffocated by keeping in my cough. . . . The King stays till he goes to supper, and about a quarter of an hour before that the Dauphin and the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy come in. At ten, or a quarter past ten o'clock, everybody goes away. I am at last by myself and I can refresh myself according to my needs; but the anxieties and fatigue of the day often hinder me from sleeping.

She certainly had ground for her stately grumblings (she prided herself on never complaining), and the King never yielded an inch to her tastes. He kept her talking for hours in draughts, till she thought of inventing a hood to her chair; and he insisted on having her windows wide open while she lay shivering with fever. On one occasion she wrote that 'she was perishing of Symmetry,' for the sake of which her Fontainebleau windows—as big as arcades—were not allowed either curtains or shutters. These were no trifles to a woman who was growing old, and they went on till she was eighty. Nor was she exacting in her demands; on the contrary, she was always austere. Some time already before the King's death she had reduced herself to one meal a day, consisting of a single dish sup-

plemented by a cup of chocolate, which she took later and subsequently gave up. During her widowhood at St. Cyr, although she had passed her fourscore years, she ate her meals at the common table with the nuns.

One wonders how far the King really cared for her after marriage. 'He loves me,' she once said to a friend, 'but only so far as he is capable of loving.' Her scoldings were taken as well as ever. On one occasion she told him he had done very wrong, and he acquiesced; later he repentantly referred to his fault. 'All that is past, Sire,' she replied; but he insisted on humbling himself. As years went on, his dependence on her increased. 'What does Reason say?' he was wont to ask, and did not at all like transacting business without her. She was present at one at least of the State Councils, sitting apart at her spinning wheel—an emblem of feminine modesty and machination—in her dress of *feuille morte* colour, permanently adopted because it brought out the lustre of her eyes.

The affairs of the Church doubled her labours. Her mission for converting others besides the King developed even before the Queen's death, when, not content with proselytising at home, she directed her attention to the distant Duchesses of Portsmouth and of York. She besieged all her Huguenot relations with letters, and refused to apologise to her cousin—one of the Villettes—for carrying off and converting, without his knowledge, his little girl of nine, whom she kept and educated. However, in spite of all this, the old story that she urged the King to persecute the Protestants and revoke the Edict of Nantes (which he did in '85) seems only to be founded on a letter long supposed to be hers, but really forged by La Beaumelle, who invented many others for her also. In reality, we find more than one passage in her letters about this time, persuading Louis to be less severe in his conduct towards the Huguenots. Had it been otherwise it would not have

tallied with the rest of her character: she had too much good taste to like persecution. She became, however, more and more the centre of orthodoxy ('L'Abbesse universelle' and 'La femme d'affaires des évêques,' St. Simon calls her); but nothing of her work remained, and, woman-like, she dealt more in ecclesiastical intrigues than in enduring affairs. Later, between 1695 and 1699, when first the Quietist and then the Jansenist heresies appeared and she was bent upon crushing them, she was more occupied with the making and unmaking of archbishops than with the ideas she was suppressing. She was guilty of the fanatic's mistake of believing that thought can be stamped out by persons carefully chosen to effect such a purpose. Her conception of her importance in the Church was stronger even than her common sense, and led her (to resume the words of the spiteful St. Simon) into 'a sea of frivolous, delusive, wearisome, sham occupations, an infinity of letters and answers, the direction of select souls and all sorts of childishness.'

Such a line of conduct was bound to be very effectual at the moment, and it is not surprising to find her the darling of Rome. Innocent XI. sent her a martyr's body from the catacombs as a delicate attention; and Alexander VIII. consulted her about the King's business and addressed her as 'our very dear daughter in Jesus Christ, the noble woman, Lady of Maintenon.'

She was one of those women who sigh over having too much to do, and all the time invent fresh tasks for themselves. Her real talent, as she always said, was for education, a gift which might have found scope enough in the training of the young and giddy Duchess of Burgundy (wife of the Dauphin's son), whom the King had entrusted to her care. But the work she cared most about was her orphanage at Noisy, a home for both rich and poor, which soon after developed into the royally-endowed Convent School of St.

Cyr. Nothing so fully embodies her spirit as this institution for educating the daughters of poor noblemen and housing aristocratic nuns. Its courtly, rather interested, piety, its cold, high-bred good sense, its capable organisation and impeccable success were all characteristic. Louis XIV. provided the young ladies with pensions when they left, and visited them more than once—calling them ‘his Daughters of Zion,’ and always impressing on them the need of his favourite virtue, Regularity. It was to amuse his jaded mind that his wife invented the famous dramatic performances of her pupils. At first they played *Andromaque*, but the heroine acted with too much passion, and the powerful foundress applied to Racine to write for her a Biblical play. *Esther* was the result, in the presence of the King; and Racine, who had retired to the chapel to pray for a blessing on his drama, was summoned thence to receive His Majesty’s compliments. There was a second representation before James II., Mary of Modena, and Madame de Sévigné; and by and by *Athalie* followed. But by this time Madame de Maintenon had discovered that the girls’ heads were turned—that they had too great a zeal for intellectual things—that the whole system of their education must be changed. After this poetry and accomplishments were discarded, and they chiefly learned housewifely arts and common sense. She instructed them herself admirably in temporal and spiritual deportment, and her discourses are models of elegant sanity. Simplicity alone suited her fastidious senses; and so she preached it, and believed her sermons to be purely religious. The young ladies were to dress in homespun and live on their estates and hate Paris and submit to their husbands, whether these were good or bad, sots or rakes. Above all, they were never to be women of influence, the most miserable fate on earth! Sometimes she disguised her sermons in little plays and dialogues, taking herself as the central figure and

recommending her virtues, even her faults, for their imitation.

She was distracted from St. Cyr by the death from small-pox of the Dauphin, in 1711 ; still more by a greater calamity in the following year, when his son, the Duke of Burgundy, the little Duchess (whom she loved as much as she could love), and their child, all died in a few days of measles. The King did not survive them long. In 1715 he passed away with a calm and august courage, begging pardon for his faults, saying farewell to all, even his servants, and commending Madame de Maintenon to the care of the Regent Orleans. He transacted a good deal of State business with a lucid brain, bidding her destroy some papers which might have made mischief between two of his Ministers, and laughing at other documents that would be useless after his death. ' I do not regret leaving anybody but you,' he said to her ; on which she bade him transfer his thoughts to his salvation. She hardly left his bedside day or night, and, though she was eighty years old, she did not take off her clothes for three days. But directly he became unconscious she consulted her confessor as to the need of her presence, and on being told that the King would not want her again she hurried away in her coach to say Masses for his soul at St. Cyr. There was still something to be done, and doing was always her method of salvation. The King did not, however, die till two days afterwards. He had been conscious enough to mutter prayers to himself till the end. It is for thus deserting the King that she has been the most severely blamed ; but her deed was the outcome of her nature—a nature that was more practical than loving—and she cannot be censured for an isolated action in harmony with herself.

How far such a woman had a heart it is difficult to say. She only felt affection where she influenced, and could love nothing but success. Failure was a bugbear to her, and

her practice of the Christian virtues failed wofully in this respect. Even her attentions to the poor, thoughtful and regular as they were, were done officially, for the sake of her soul, and were not warmed by charity. The creatures she was most near loving were the little Duc de Maine and the Duchess of Burgundy. But the former, with some justice, she looked upon as her creation; and the latter had to be perpetually reclaimed from the gambling-table, to which, in spite of her sweet nature, she was incurably addicted. To her adopted niece—a girl of independent spirit—Madame de Maintenon was very chilly as long as the girl lived with her; and it was only when she married and made a social success that her aunt recognised her merits.

In speaking of those she was near loving, we should perhaps have made earlier mention of her only brother, to whom so many of her letters are addressed. She was really attached to him, was patient about his frequent scrapes, and made noble sacrifices—financial and otherwise—for his sake. Nevertheless, her affection was overpowered by the fact that he was only a ‘bourgeois de Paris,’ and when he married a bourgeoisie of fifteen Madame de Maintenon’s heart—we should say her taste—was almost broken. But despair was not for her. With her usual courage and capability, she set about schooling her ill-bred sister-in-law. ‘*Je suis en train d’éducation,*’ she announced, and she found plenty to correct. Madame d’Aubigné must not eat jam at the wrong meals (there were meals for jam and meals for butter); she must leave off imitating the grimaces of Madame de Longueville and laughing in a forced manner; she must write oftener, and then Madame will ‘have the complaisance to answer her’; she must walk out with a ‘prudish woman from the middle classes,’ and not pretend to a fashionable chaperone. When she was good she should be rewarded; when she was not she should

have no presents ; and when she was exacting Madame de Maintenon sent her a long list of the favours she had already conferred on her, among which were a 'robe de chambre de peluche couleur de feu,' a 'sac de velours cramoisi,' two caps in *point de France*, and other garments, amounting in all to 2661 francs. In spite of her regrets for her brother's position, she never tried to make his wife into a woman of the world, and had the good sense to do no more than try to equip her for the post she occupied.

Nowhere is the superiority of her practical qualities over her feeling more apparent than in these particular letters. She arranged the embarrassed finances of the couple in a masterly way, going into every detail of their income and necessities—the candles that were needed in each room and the proper uses of candle-ends and scraps of chicken. Their annual expenditure, she reckoned, should come to £480, allowing £20 a month for food, light, and firing in a household of eleven, £40 for rent (which she called an over-statement), £40 for Madame d'Aubigné's dress, and £120 for her brother's private expenses. If she were allowed to play absolute Providence, she acted with real beneficence ; but she turned Providence into a governess, and if her advice was refused she was offended.

It is an accepted axiom that poets alone are extravagant ; but it is no less true that mentors have their excesses, and Madame de Maintenon's correspondence might stand as a proof of this assertion. Like many reprovers of others' folly, she was afraid of making herself absurd :

I had [she once observed] a great fund of religion, which hindered me from doing any evil . . . which made me hate anything that could bring me into contempt.

She ran riot in self-preservation—mental preservation, be it understood—and composed a kind of spiritual grammar by which she regulated her feelings.

The liking that people had for me [she says] was an abstract friendship—a friendship founded on esteem rather than on love. I have never wanted to be loved intimately by any one : I wished to be loved by all the world and to hear my name pronounced with admiring respect . . . above all, to be approved of by people of standing—that was my idol.

It was not a lovable idol. Prudence is only a means, and when it is taken as an end it revenges itself on the blunderer. The reputation that Madame de Maintenon cherished has certainly suffered for her coldness.

The last years of her life were perhaps the most amiable, for in the retirement of St. Cyr she reigned supreme and was constantly exercising her best faculty—that of teaching. Until her death, at eighty-four, the children and the novices came every afternoon to her bedroom for instruction. She rose at six every morning, attended two Masses in the Chapel, returned there at four, and remained till six in the evening. One day a month she prepared her soul for death, and her good works were countless. ‘Ah, Madame!’ said one of the adulating nuns, ‘it is not everybody who has a heart like you.’ ‘Je le sais,’ was all that Madame answered. Another time, when she was pressed to write her life, she refused. It would, she said, be only a spiritual record. ‘None but the Saints could be interested.’ Such was her conclusion—a fair measure of the position she assigned to herself.

In 1717 the Czar and his interpreter came to pay a visit to her bedside. He asked her what was the matter. She answered that it was old age and weakness : but, as he did not understand and the interpreter could not interpret, the call came speedily to an end. This was practically her last State function. In April, 1719, she fell ill of fever, and knew that she was dying. Her confessor begged her to bless her household. She abased herself by refusing ; but he insisted, and she raised her hands in benediction. It was

her last action, and soon after she died in peace. She was buried in the Church of St. Cyr with great pomp, and followed to the grave by Cardinals and Princes of the Blood.

She might be the text of a hundred sermons ; but it is not for us to preach them. One merit she certainly had, and that was to tell the truth about herself as far as she knew it. Whoever will turn to her writings—her *Letters and Conversations*—will find her whole self there. They are fascinating reading, whether as human documents or as models of elaborate simplicity and lucid advice. When we have put them down little remains to be said, and that little Madame du Deffand has said for us. ‘ I have finished reading her,’ she wrote a century after Madame de Maintenon’s day ; ‘ and the result is a high opinion of her mind, a low opinion of her heart, and no taste at all for her person ; but I persist in maintaining that she was by no means false.’ It is not the epitaph *Sa Solidité* would have chosen ; but there are many to endorse it.

1900.

CHARLOTTE YONGE AS A CHRONICLER

It was only the other day that Charlotte Yonge was laid to rest at Hursley in Hampshire, near the cross of John Keble, her guide and her intimate friend. There are probably few people born between 1845 and 1865 who did not leave a little piece of their hearts in her quiet grave. What eager girl of the 'seventies did not mould herself upon Ethel in *The Daisy Chain*, with her untidy skirts and her visions of reforming Cocksmoor? Who has not thrilled over the Doubts of Norman at Oxford? And which of us that happened to have an ailment in that period did not try to give the sweet if impossible smile of Margaret May upon her sofa? Robert Browning says that 'if you die, there's the dying Alexander'; but who would not much rather have died like Guy Morville, the heir of Redclyffe? We may have been the greater prigs for doing so, and self-examination can be a morbid habit. And yet is it more unwholesome than the self-analysis and the fear of being absurd that possess the present generation? It is, at all events, the outcome of moral enthusiasm, not of rather aimless criticism; and the annals of commonplace virtue are not more tedious than the annals of commonplace vice. Miss Yonge is as lengthy as you choose, but what can be lengthier than a modern realistic novel?

In limited space it is impossible to do justice to all her efforts. Perhaps her historical stories and studies are the most irreproachable of these. When she gets to other centuries than her own she is freer from the trammels of duty and moralising, and is able to put her particular tenets

into fancy dress. But her domestic chronicles best embody herself. All that was original in her is there, and it is to them that this review will confine itself.

Charlotte Yonge's chief gift is not a literary one: it is rather a moral gift—the faculty of intimacy. This it was, perhaps, which endeared her to more than one distinguished mind. In the *Memoir* of Tennyson, Mr. Palgrave records how one night, in a Devonshire inn, he shared a room with him, and how the poet lay in his bed with a candle persistently reading a book of Miss Yonge's, which he had already been opening 'at every disengaged moment, while rambling over the moor.' 'I see land!' cried Tennyson at last: 'Mr. — is going to be confirmed.' It is well known, too, how Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites read and re-read *The Heir of Redclyffe*, the novel to which we find it most difficult to return. There are, of course, obvious reasons outside her characters to account for their taste. Charlotte Yonge was the child of the Tractarian School, without any of its extravagances, and her tone of symbolism was congenial to the Brotherhood; so were the books that were influencing her—*Sintram* and the *Morte d'Arthur*. And however different was her treatment of material, her range of subjects was analogous to theirs, and varied between historical romance and the homeliest themes. But she could hardly have affected them as she did had it not been for her deep, if narrow, moral insight and her faithful minuteness of description. Her work, as a recent critic¹ has cleverly pointed out, was in her own little province the result of Wordsworth.

The secret of Charlotte Yonge's strength lies in this: she plucks the heart out of the obvious—she evokes the familiar. No one can more potently stir the associations that recall our childhood's excitements: the emotions of lessons; the dual life of inner visions and walks with the governess;

¹ 'Charlotte Yonge,' by Ethel Earl, *The Pilot*, March 30, 1901.

the very smell of a school-treat at Christmas ; the hissing of the tea-urn which brought us our evening liberty. *The Daisy Chain* is an epic, the *Iliad* of the schoolroom, and should hold its place as a moral classic.

But if we are to make a preposterous analogy, Miss Yonge is, on the whole, more like Zola than Homer in her methods. Both she and the French novelist take an enormous canvas and, with prodigious industry, work out the experience of each of their characters. The Rougon-Macquarts are almost as numerous as the Mays, or the Pillars of the House, and, like them, recur through an endless series of volumes. Both writers have the same courage in the face of tediousness, and the same faults—overgrown conscience and prolixity. Their themes, it must be owned, are very different. Miss Yonge is at her best when she describes youth. The life of girlhood between twelve and twenty-five lies open to her with its joys and struggles, and so does every unimportant, all-important detail of daily existence in a country neighbourhood. What, for instance, can be more arresting—what can carry us more directly into the centre of things—than the opening of *The Daisy Chain* ?

‘Miss Winter, are you busy? Do you want this afternoon? Can you take a good long walk?’

‘Ethel, my dear, how often have I told you of your impetuosity—you have forgotten.’

‘Very well’—with an impatient twist—‘I beg your pardon. Good morning, Miss Winter,’ said a thin, lank, angular, sallow girl just fifteen.

Here is the gift of intimacy : a something that puts us in touch with her people at once. And she knows in their essence all the little things that affect family life, even to the frictions that exist, without fault on any side, between differing temperaments in the same circle. That is why we do not so much read her stories as live next door to

her characters, embracing all the worry and tedium as well as the pleasure which identification with a family must mean. When the Underwoods and Merryfields have the measles we know exactly which one is the worst, and want to go and inquire after them. When the Pillars of the House give a party on about eighteenpence and entertain the County on that modest sum (Miss Yonge has a discreet partiality for orthodox lords), we find ourselves growing needlessly harassed lest the home-made cakes should be too heavy. And when (in *The Clever Woman of the Family*) Ermine Williams, the Absolute Idea of the Invalid, puts on her 'Nürnberg horn brooch' to welcome the lover she had counted as dead, we are consumed with desire to see what she looked like. Or take *Countess Kate*, perhaps the most flawless of her domestic stories. How well we know the ardent, aggravating, lovable, grandiloquent little girl, with her private heroics, her awkwardness in public, her unsatisfied heart; and Rachel, too, the infallible, 'the Clever Woman' of a small set, who made a 'mission' of her ladylike cousin's family, to the destruction of their comfort, and in due time landed herself in a happy marriage with a soldier of iron will. These and a dozen more come back to our mind like well-remembered visitors. Indeed, if we search Miss Yonge's many novels, we shall find there the germs of most of the women's characters that we come across in the world; it is the circumscribed development she gives them, apart from the accidents of time and fashion, that makes them often seem remote from our knowledge. There is at least no lack of depth in Charlotte Yonge. If we want the deeper aspects of family experience—the things all feel and seldom formulate—no one is better at suggesting them. When scarlet fever seized the delicate boy of the May family, Ethel and her father felt grave forebodings.

Ethel silently and rapidly moved about, dreading to give an interval for tremblings of heart. Five years of family prosperity

had passed, and there had been that insensible feeling of peace and immunity from care which is strange to look back upon when one hour has drifted from smooth water to turbid currents. There was a sort of awe in seeing the mysterious gates of sorrow again unclosed.

In work, in character-drawing, such as all this, there is the saving grace, the steady force of reality. From the heart it comes; to the heart it goes. And, in so far, it will retain its vital quality.

It is when Miss Yonge leaves her set limits that truth forsakes her. She is not an artist; the æsthetic sense is outside her and generally counts as a danger in her scheme of existence. Mr. Rivers in *The Daisy Chain*—who possesses a Claude and a portfolio of engravings from Raphael, and likes ‘a show set of peasants in rustic cottages,’ and puts ‘all that offends the eye out of the way’—has, according to Dr. May, ‘cultivated his taste till it is getting to be a disease.’ And Cherry Underwood’s picture, painted to the glory of heaven, without much knowledge of drawing, was at once accepted by the Academy, and must have been a pretty bad specimen. None, indeed, of her artists are happy in their mind when once outside the lych-gate of their church. But, after all, bad art for the glory of heaven is no worse than bad art for art’s sake—the ideal of modern stories—and has the advantage of possessing a practical motive which is applicable to other forms of activity. It must be owned, though, that Miss Yonge carries that motive pretty far. Sports, games even, do not escape. Croquet is frequently a matter for prayer: for or against, according as the croquet-player is indolent by temperament or too much absorbed in the game. Her favourite lady in *The Clever Woman of the Family* yields to it only by degrees, because she long believed it to be the monopoly of fast officers and their set. And bicycles (touchingly introduced into her last volume, *Modern Broods*) are merely

allowed because they can be ridden in the service of the Church. 'Magdalen (runs the story) had, however, decided on granting the bicycles. She had found plenty of use for her own, for it was possible, with prudent use of it, avoiding the worst parts of the road, to be at early celebration at St. Andrew's, and get to the Sunday School at Arnscombe afterwards.'

It is impossible to imagine many men reading Miss Yonge. There is an intemperate tameness about her—at once her charm and her defect—which forbids our associating mankind with her. It would be as if we dreamed of them taking high tea *in perpetuo*. Her masculine portraits are generally impossible. She can manage a father or a colonial bishop, or even a widower clergyman. Dr. May is the real hero of *The Daisy Chain* and *The Trial*; and the Diocesan in the last story, or blind Mr. Clare in *The Clever Woman of the Family*, can mildly hold his own. But her lovers, clerical and military, and, worse still, her man of the world! Her conception of the latter is embodied in Philip Morville, who frequently stays with a lord in a gay country-house, and says 'Encore!' when the visitors' bell rings a second time in the villa of his untitled uncle; or again, in Dr. May's utterance when he found the sitting-room 'pervaded with an odour of nutmeg and port-wine,' while 'a kettle, a decanter and empty tumblers told tales'—of nothing worse than Tom's attempt to cure his younger brother's cold. 'Cold,' says the Doctor, 'is always the excuse. But, another time, don't teach your brother to make this place like a fast man's rooms.'

Miss Yonge prefers the Church or the Army as a calling for her favourites, but she allows other vocations. That Pillar of the House who became the editor of a high-toned newspaper, besides squires, doctors, sailors, the weary politician and an emigrant farmer or two, come across our memory as we write. But as all of them are bent on devot-

ing their professions to the cause of the Anglican Church, their talk is, so to speak, reduced to a common denominator. Extreme heartiness is her favourite method of producing a manly note in conversation ; and rather outlandish ejaculations, such as 'Aye!' 'Ha!' 'Nay!' 'What say you?' are frequent in the mouths of the men in her books. They are not much more successful in feeling than in speech. When Leonard Ward is condemned to death for a murder of which he is innocent, he is resigned, even pleased to be hanged, because he had once, unpunished, thrown a stone (which did not hit) at his elder brother for telling him the drawing-room was untidy. Guy Morville, the heir of Redclyffe, cures himself of the Redclyffe temper by playing the 'Harmonious Blacksmith' whenever he is impatient—though the amount of time he must have wasted in running to and from the piano is incalculable. Or, if we want a Bacchanalia of mildness, let us look in upon the proceedings on Philip Morville's wedding-day—the crown of a long and faithful though clandestine love.

It was late before he appeared at all, and when he came down there was nothing so plainly written on his face as headache. It was so severe that the most merciful thing was to send him to lie on the sofa in the drawing-room. Amabel said she would fetch him some camphor, and disappeared, while Laura (the bride) sat still with forced composure. Her father fidgeted, only restrained by her presence from expressing his fears that Philip was too unwell for the marriage to take place to-day, and Charles talked cheerfully of the great improvement in his general health. . . . At the last moment she (Amabel) went to warn Philip it was time to go, if he meant to walk to church alone, the best thing for his head.

It should perhaps be mentioned that the headache came from remorse and had already lasted eighteen months. There should be a separate treatise on Miss Yonge's treatment of illness, as the maladies in her novels, whether

proceeding from fire or fever, whether from shrunken tendons or overwork, are alike only cured by joy, repentance, or some other well-regulated feeling. But these, like Philip's remorse, belong to the machinery of her tales. She is happily too sensible a woman to make for a plot as a rule. When she does so it is an anomaly, whether in *The Trial*, where for three years the escaped villain keeps in his pocket the only document that can inculcate him; or in *The Clever Woman of the Family*, where the deceptions practised by the robber and forger are such as a baby-thief would not attempt. In that book, too, so that no fault may be left unwarned in her works, she conscientiously allows Bessie Keith the mildest of married flirtations with Mr. Carleton, formerly rejected by her. But where it reaches its apex (we cannot call it a crisis) she has the misfortune to be upon a croquet-lawn. In her guilty excitement and desire to reach her relations she trips over a hoop, falls, and dies a few hours afterwards from an internal injury, the effect of the accident. The culprit gives up fishing in the agony of his regret and takes to a serious profession, much to the pleasure of his Mama. Her uncle reads the burial-service, and all the other clergymen and officers, with their wives and nieces, live rather happily ever afterwards.

When we consider episodes such as these, we cannot be surprised that the rising generation for the most part refuse to read Charlotte Yonge—except for her historical stories. The smallness of her experience, or rather (for that might apply to Miss Austen) of the results of her experience, puts them off her track. She is never perfect outside the hearth, and the hearth is not very popular just now. No more is the British Gentlewoman, but if ever a temple were built for her Miss Yonge should figure as its goddess. The young people brought up on Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling demand more colour and movement than she can give them.

And yet in her last book she has tried hard to put herself in touch with them and has made pathetic concessions. Pneumatic tyres are adapted to self-sacrifice. The girl who longs for Girton is allowed to go to Oxford, and finds the womanly daughter and modest niece of an Anglican lord as her fellow-students ; Dolores, the author's favourite maiden, gives lectures on electricity and founds a reading-settlement. But it is no good. The girls of to-day cannot *see themselves* in Miss Yonge, and that is their chief demand from literature : for young people are not imaginative. Besides, this is a critical age. ' I can't read Miss Yonge ! ' said a little girl the other day : ' she makes such long conversations, and thinks everything she talks of is the same ; it doesn't seem to matter to her if it's a little dog, or self-denial, or a young girl, or a leaf.' It is always easier for youth to detect faults than virtues.

And what have people in their teens in the place of Charlotte Yonge ? The natural answer seems to be : ' Mrs. Humphry Ward.' She, too, writes the serious family story, unexceptionable in tone and dealing with religious problems. She, too, depicts the spiritual trials of clergymen and young women. She paints the earnest priest who goes out of the Church, Miss Yonge the earnest priest who stays in it—each according to her generation ; and Norman May is at least as living as Robert Elsmere. But when we come to women, it is the elder author who bears off the palm. Will Marcella with her humanitarian visions, her beauty, her diamonds, and her influence in society, live as long as dowdy, noble Ethel with her merely Christian scheme ? Or has the fast, brilliant, free-thinking heroine of *Helbeck of Bannisdale* the vitality of Angela Underwood, half-flirt, half-saint, with her hoyden tricks, her taste for Ritualism, and her hidden capacities for devotion ? In the sum of her work, too, Miss Yonge gains the prize ; her books live for us and remain in our hearts as Mrs. Ward's

hardly will, in spite of the fact that the author of *Marcella* treats of people and subjects much more congenial to us than those of *The Heir of Redclyffe*. For when we come to compare the ground that both ladies cover—when we are confronted by Mrs. Ward's vast range of themes temporal and spiritual, the pen halts and the analogy stops.

The reason why Miss Yonge wears is not far to seek. Her experience is limited, but it is deep, it is first-hand. She has chosen a narrow path, but all that she describes on that path is described from her own observation. She is herself : unconscious, spontaneous and human. The people she evokes are no sudden creations : they have always been in her affections. Nevertheless it is natural that, in spite of her virtues, she should be neglected, while the novels of Mrs. Ward are devoured by an audience whose needs she represents, whose dialect she talks.

And yet it is a misfortune. Miss Yonge could supply this generation with many of the qualities it lacks. Unselfishness and reverence are virtues none too common, and the wider the channel they flow in the better are they worth having. Charlotte Yonge appeals to enduring feelings, not to fleeting emotions ; and, when all is said, a belief in the possibility of doing good is better than the belief that no good can be done.

1901.

EMILY LAWLESS

LAST October there passed out from among us one of our few women-poets, Emily Lawless, Irishwoman first, and all the rest afterwards. All the rest includes a great deal : a writer of novels and of romance, an historian, a naturalist, a lover of science, a bold thinker. And in each of these many parts Emily Lawless won distinction ; in her poems, in her writing of Irish romances, of *Hurriah* and of *Grania*, something stronger and more likely to endure.

If she was first an Irishwoman, it was not of the type usually accepted as representative, at least in England—the vague and mystical Celt, impetuous, unpractical, guided by forces outside reason. The mind of Emily Lawless was a concrete mind with a turn for affairs ; with a man's business outlook, large and lucid, not over-concerned with detail ; still more with a gift for natural science, her ' ruling passion ' from seven years old onwards, and for the methods of minute research. But under this fine and interesting *terra firma* there ran deeper than can plummet sound the unconscious currents of race—flashing here and there to the surface, when and how she herself knew not—persistent questionings of the unseen, gleams of intuition, a sudden brilliant vision of the past, a wild stirring of the blood, a passionate companionship with Irish earth and sea ; or—more rarely—tranquil pools of inspiration reflecting in their depths the things she brought from afar. Perhaps there are few people in whom the two strains of artist and of woman keep so distinctly alongside—seldom fusing, touching occasionally, yet without causing the

conflict, the clash of emotions which has troubled so many creators. What disturbance she suffered from her gifts was nearly always intellectual, unless it were from the nervous stress of work. Her poetry flowed easily from her, was almost her pastime; and, until illness overtook her, the writing of her books gave her pleasure. This was the more remarkable because when she began her real career as a writer she was already forty-one, and had no spring of youth to help her.

Emily Lawless was born in Ireland in 1845. Her father was the third Lord Cloncurry, her mother the beautiful Miss Kirwan of Galway. Her great-grandfather, the first peer, was the famous opponent of the Union, twice imprisoned in the Tower—a born hero of romance, but a good administrator, clear-headed and beneficent, who united in himself some of the gifts that distinguished his great-granddaughter. He is good to read of amidst his picturesque doings with Ministers and patriots, with O'Connell and the rest, as chronicled by his son in his *Life and Letters*. And it was from his day and through his conversion that his family embraced the Protestant faith.

Emily Lawless spent the best parts of her childhood in the West of Ireland, in her mother's home and country; and Castle Hackett and County Galway and the haunted hill of Cruchmaa and the islands of Aran made up her land of enchantment, the country which every child creates for itself, but which this child found ready to her hand. The haunted hill belonged to her own family, it was a treasury of fairy-lore; and the moody, ever-changing Atlantic, with its strange voices of calm and storm, its wheeling sea-birds, its huge swelling stretches, its dark hiding-places amidst the cliffs and caves, its sounds and gullies rich in silver mackerel—that Atlantic peculiarly her own—was no less a magic playground full of things she could never know, full also of strange things—sea-creatures—which she

could know, and early learned to dredge for. Her mother must have made part of all the romance. She was beautiful with a kind of arresting beauty which lay largely in the harmony of her features, but her charm was not confined to any form, it was conveyed by her whole person. Slender, frail, sparkling, grace itself, full of movement and sympathy, even in old age Lady Cloncurry made many lovers, and in her youth she carried all before her. She and her husband left their eight children full liberty—to the four girls no less than the four boys. As soon as she was past babyhood Emily was allowed the run of the far-stretching grounds by herself, now on foot, now on the back of her pony. Yet even at this moment, when all her best joys were open-air joys, she had one other taste which was prophetic—a dominating love of fine language. Big words had such a fascination for her that when she could not get out she spent hours curled up among the bookshelves in her father's library, turning over heavy old volumes, Elizabethan plays and the like; getting off by heart long portions in which the sound of the words pleased her, and reciting them to whoever would listen. The meaning did not concern her, and the results were not altogether convenient. On one occasion, when she was eight years old, her father was giving a dinner to a party of sporting squires, jovial port-drinking gentlemen, and, proud of his little girl's achievements, he told her as she sat at dessert to get up and repeat one of her 'pieces.' She obeyed. But unfortunately her last 'piece' was from an Elizabethan play—the speech of an outraged husband to a faithless wife—and it had attracted her because of the grand sound of a word which ended each line of the passage. It was a term of insult, the most improper in the English language. She loudly declaimed her blank verse, rolling off her favourite word with gusto to the great bewilderment of the squires, till her father, at first speechless, recovered his presence of mind and with a

‘Thank you, Emily; very nice, but that is enough,’ put an end to her performance.

For the rest, from the outset, her life was that of a naturalist, greatly to the inconvenience of the nursery. Stray grasshoppers crawled on beds and carpets; an ‘exceptionally clammy frog . . . carried in a hot little hand till it could be carried no longer, was placed in the widely open neck-frill of a younger brother, which presented itself as a suitable receptacle, from whence it rapidly travelled downhill over his entire remonstrating person.’ But Emily Lawless’s aspirations soon assumed more impressive proportions. ‘Nine years old,’ she says, ‘has always seemed to me to be the really culminating moment, the true pinnacle of human ambition.’ When she was that blessed age she

inscribed, in a handwriting of quite incredible shakiness and illegibility, the names of three snail-shells, two butterflies, and four moths—copied out of Lardner’s *Cabinet Encyclopaedia*, with spelling variations of her own—also of a limestone fossil, a piece of feldspar, a fragment of mica, a stone celt . . . and a piece of plum-pudding stone—set down as ‘Conglomerate.’ After which . . . she inscribed above the rest in a handwriting even more tottering . . . *The Union of all the Sciences*, by—her own name in full.

Her ambition soon took a definite shape—the discovery of ‘some bird or quadruped “new to science,”’ a modest aim by the side of which all schoolroom knowledge, more especially that of the frivolous arts, seemed a mere object of contempt. The new bird or quadruped was gradually transformed into a new butterfly or moth, and in quest of this moth it was that the ten-year-old entomologist had her great adventure. She herself, many years afterwards, recorded the terrors of it: how, mistaking the time, she stole out secretly at 3 A.M. instead of at daybreak, the official moth-pill-box in hand; and how in the course of her miserable search, chilled and boggy-haunted, she ‘struck gold’ in the guise of an hitherto

unknown moth ; how, still having two hours to wait till the house should open, she crept into a haystack, and how suddenly she found herself buried in it, unable to get out, half smothered and in very real peril, for no one would pass near till the morning ; how when a workman did at last arrive and heard her scream, he took her for a ghost and fled away, and how she was at last extricated and went home.

It was not until hours after all this that, for the first time since the early morning, she suddenly remembered her capture, which was to make her name famous for ever. Springing from her bed, she ran quickly to where her jacket had been thrown, and plunged her hand with beating heart into its pocket. . . . In her many writhings and wriggings the chip-box had long since resolved itself into a mere handful of broken chips, while the captive itself—the ‘Great Unknown’—had resolved itself into a few pinches of vividly green dust at the very bottom of her pocket.

This moth-hunt was the precursor of many less effective but maturer raids by lantern-light, under mossy tree-roots, in woods, in the open, wherever knowledge and instinct led her. And she soon extended her field. Those who accompanied her remember the excitement of sailing with her on dredging expeditions, whether among her own rock islands or in more distant waters, and tell how she always knew just where to stop the boat and find the creatures she sought—‘creatures that I never knew were there,’ said a Riviera fisherman who once took her out on the Mediterranean. Her love of flowers dates no less from early days, especially of the rock-flowers of Clare and the islands of Aran—‘gentian and saxifrage, pimpernel and eyebright.’ None could describe their kind better than she could :

Close among its ledges clusters snowy dryas,
Rose-like are the flowers, yet it clutches hard the rock,
Claw-like its rootlets, roots like claws of sea-gulls,
Scornful of the tempest, and proof ’gainst every shock,

Campions fill the corners, careless little growers,
Loved of the roving moth which visits them at night ;
Under silvery leaflets round balloon-like blossoms
Tumble in a tangled mat mingled green and white.¹

She loved the struggle of these lowly rock-plants with sea and wind, their laborious radiant victory, their faint scent that had to be pressed out of them, their reserve, their strength, their hidden lives known to so few—loved them as she loved the island people. Anything indeed, shell, flower or creature, belonging to the rocks, gave her a peculiar pleasure—and anything belonging to the sea. It was characteristic of her that it was so. She liked bareness and endurance better than fertility and ease. But she adored colour and movement, swift movement of wind or water, horse or petrel. To cleave the waves, swimming or sailing, to cleave the air on horseback—these were her great joys, greater than art or even poetry. Rather were they the same thing, for to her they meant self-expression ; to her ‘ the poetry of earth was never dead ’—that poetry which she so often chose to articulate in terms of science. The strongest remembrance of her kept by an old friend of her youth was that of a girl with ‘ tossing corn-coloured hair ’ galloping about County Clare. Her physical life was at least as strong as her intellectual life, her taste for science as pronounced as her taste for poetry.

There is little to tell about Miss Lawless’s youth. She had the grief of losing her father at fourteen ; to her fascinating mother, like the rest of the family, she had a great devotion. Later, two of her sisters died while still in their prime, and, worst grief of all, she lost her younger brother, Denis, her closest companion, who shared so many of her gifts as well as of her tastes, and who was cut off by a cruel illness in the fulness of his brilliant powers. Not long before her mother had passed away—the mother who had been the

¹ ‘ From the Burren ’ (*The Inalienable Heritage*).

astonished adorer of her daughter's gifts—who had always seemed to that daughter younger than herself. So runs the sonnet which Emily wrote to her :

Why reckon thus the years between us twain,
For what is Autumn when its leaves are brown,
And brutal winds lay bare the shivering plain,
Nipping all harvests with their deadly frown?

Or what is Winter, when no flake of snow
Has touched the least leaf of one budding spray
In happy climes where Summers never go,
But star-lit night succeeds to laughing day?

When not one leaf in all the forest fades,
And dull December breathes of odorous June,
And flitting birds pipe through the soft green glades,
And every streamlet sings its old sweet tune?

Autumn is Winter when its days are chill,
But Winter without frosts is Summer still.

But these sorrows were scattered over many years. Meanwhile she lived out her youth: she went out into the world, loving good talk, we may be sure, more than dancing, but never so happy as when she got back to her native land of Clare and her rock-strewn Burren. Or else it was to the Cloncurrys' place at Lyons and, later, to Maretimo near Dublin, where her mother made her home, where her second brother, Frederic, now lives. She matured early, she read much, spending hours over books—over history, fiction, science, poetry; yet, except for a few stray articles concerning natural history, she printed nothing before middle-age. Her first story, *A Chelsea Cousin*, which appeared anonymously in 1882, met with no success. And it was not till four years later that she published her earliest Irish novel, encouraged by her meeting and quickly ripening intimacy with Mrs. Oliphant, that racy and fertile story-teller, that truest and tenderest of friends and critics. *Hurriah* was a story of the peasants of Galway. It came

out in 1886, a momentous year for Ireland and one that doubtless helped the reputation which the book would in any case have had. Big politicians and the ordinary public were alike preoccupied with the Irish, wishing to know more of them, sensitive to the dramatic contrasts their country presents. *Hurriish* had an instantaneous effect. Distinguished people of all sorts, those concerned with affairs and those concerned with letters, hailed her as a new light in the literary heaven. She found herself famous. But its success was exceeded by that of her second Irish novel, *Grania*, a tale of the isles of Aran, which appeared in 1892, when her name as a representative of Ireland had been made not only by *Hurriish* but by her *Essex in Ireland* (1890) and her *Ireland* ('Story of the Nations' Series, 1887); when, also, the curiosity of England about Ireland had increased. Perhaps no woman ever had a quicker or more flattering welcome from great statesmen as well as from fellow-artists. Public men wrote to thank her for enlightenment as well as for pleasure; Gladstone was enchanted; Morley compared her writing to that of George Sand; Meredith, Lecky, Lord Bowen and a host of others, great and small, acclaimed her in letters and in talk. But the greatest laurel conferred upon the book was from the hand of Swinburne. The story of the island-folk, primitive, mystic, pagan—unconscious endurers, part of Nature and her storms and struggles—knowing no tongue but the Irish—went straight to the poet's imagination, and his letter is not only a tribute, it is an emblem of the way that a book could act upon him:

Nothing [he writes] that our friend Lady B—— can possibly have told you can express my admiration of *Grania*. I hope you will not think it impertinent of me to avail myself of this opportunity of saying to you what I say to others, that I think it just one of the most exquisite and perfect works of genius in the language—unique in pathos, humour, and convincing

persuasion of truthfulness. I should like to write a great deal more about it, but I spare you the trouble of reading what it would hardly be in good taste (or 'form') to inflict on you. Besides, you must be *blasée* with praise and thanksgiving. Still, I think if you knew them you would be gratified by the appreciation of the ladies, old and young, of my own family to whom I have given copies. But, of course, it is one of the books about which there can be but one opinion among all readers above the intellectual and moral level of a chimpanzee.

And again :

It is I who in common with all your readers owe you a debt of inexpressible gratitude. My friend, Mr. Watts, desires me to say how fully he shares my admiration of *Grania*. But then who doesn't? I most earnestly hope that the ill-health which alone could possibly account for your feeling disinclined to confer any more benefits on the world of appreciative readers has passed or is passing away. . . . I should have thought—on my honour—publishers must all be at your feet begging for anything more from the writer of that immortal story. But, as for offering the public what the public does not want to read and declines to buy, that is my normal position, or at least it often has been for years together, and it has never discouraged me from writing to please myself and the few others I ever care about pleasing.

It was not to *Grania* but to *Essex in Ireland* that Miss Lawless owed another illustrious acquaintance, that with Mr. Gladstone. This record of Essex's Irish experience, purporting to be written by one of his followers, was taken by Gladstone to be authentic; he wrote in excitement at the discovery, and was, perhaps, still more excited at the further discovery of his error. Not long after this, he fulfilled his desire of seeing Miss Lawless. She was staying at Cannes, in a hotel, and happened to be resting on her bed, in her dressing-gown with no shoes on her feet, when she heard a man's footstep and a knock at her bedroom door. Thinking it was the waiter who always brought her

her post and her tea, she took no notice till a deep voice said : ' May I come in ? ' and, turning round hastily, she saw the face of Mr. Gladstone peering round the door. She leaped to her feet, hid the deficiencies in her dress as best she could—a needless precaution, for he never noticed them—and sat down near him to enjoy two hours of his rich, unbroken, mid-stream conversation—for, after he had explained that he was staying with Lord Rendel near by, he wasted no more time in non-essentials. *Tour de force* though *Essex in Ireland* is, it required, perhaps, a man of Gladstone's Homeric naïveté and immense power of belief to take it for a contemporary document ; its very correctness and regularity would have aroused suspicion in minds more critical and more conversant with the luxuriant waywardness of Elizabethan English. But a wonderful piece of work it remains—' the only one of my books that gives me any personal satisfaction,' she says, ' partly because I am able to imagine it is *not* by me.' And there was another reason. ' The true hero, or rather heroine,' she writes elsewhere, ' is the wretched country itself, groaning under its troubles, yet with that curious fascination which we all feel, though we can hardly tell where it lies.'

Gladstone's visit Miss Lawless always counted as among the epochs in her existence. Fame brought her, indeed, a full harvest of praise—from Archbishop Manning and from Aubrey de Vere, among others, from women as well as men ; new friendships also, especially those with Lecky, the historian, and Sir Alfred Lyall, the intercourse with whom remained as central interests in her life. To both of these she was an intellectual comrade ; with both she discussed public matters—Ireland and its history with Lecky, India with Sir Alfred, poetry with both, especially with the writer of *Theology in Extremis*. Sir Alfred and Emily Lawless were equal in their admiration of one another's verse. And Lord Dufferin was another of the fervid corre-

spondents evoked by her books, and remained as a warm, supporting friend to cheer her with his sympathy.

Friends, indeed, Miss Lawless never lacked, new or old. And among the oldest of these was one who materially influenced her practical life and thought—her cousin, Sir Horace Plunkett, with whose noble schemes for the agricultural and industrial development of Ireland she identified herself, as far as in her lay :

There are [she wrote to him] few cases of racial peculiarity more fixed than the marked Celtic dislike to the dull routine of husbandry. Your own co-operative work has been so largely a higher development of pastoral industries which are the hope of the Ireland of the future.

Her pen was ever at the service of *The Homestead*, the organ of Sir Horace Plunkett's Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, where several of her poems appeared ; and for its leading contributor—its most eloquent voice—'A. E.' (George Russell)—she had an unbounded admiration. The women's branch of the movement, started within more recent years, had also her warm effectual sympathy.

I have 'The United Irishwomen' a good deal on my mind [she wrote to Sir Horace in 1911], and should like to help it, though it would be absurd to put my name on any active list of it. I have two short stories which I think might be put together and sold for its benefit about Xmas-time. They are archaic, but rather interesting. They were part of a series I meant to make a volume of, but, like all my other literary work, it died a natural death from ill-health. I should call the booklet *Wolfland*, as it belongs to the days when Ireland was the home and hunting-ground of those cheerful animals, and we might give it a white coat and put 'Sold for the benefit of "The United Irishwomen"' prominently on the corner.

I had a long and very amiable letter from — lately, who asserts that I 'helped them'—i.e. the Gaelic Theatre and circle! I was not aware of it, but it shows that I'm not at

least antagonistic. I am not *anti-Gaelic* at all so long as it is only Gaelic *enthuse* and does not include politics.

Like Sir Horace Plunkett, Miss Lawless was Irish first and political afterwards. She was a Unionist; she would have liked to be able to be a Home Ruler, but she did not regard her countrymen as ripe for self-government. None the less for that did she love her land with a love that was in her bones and being, and she longed to work for Ireland :

You will see [she said to a friend in 1905] that *Yet Wherefore* (a poem) has all your suggestions carried out except as to putting Heaven into the chief place instead of Ireland. That it may be the better place of the two I am willing to admit, but the latter has at present more of my affections, so I had to leave it the place of honour.

It was not only in public matters that Sir Horace Plunkett affected his cousin's mind. They kept up a constant correspondence, and, perhaps more than any one, he lent her the intellectual stimulus and companionship on which, as her health grew weaker, she increasingly depended. In 1911 she was working at a new edition of *Ireland* and brooding over her last story, *Castlebar*, the completion of which had finally to be left to another :

You would be astonished [she wrote to Sir Horace] at the fresh impetus your last letter has given to my poor, more or less moribund wits. I suppose that is the weak point of being after all a woman, and so dependent on sympathy even in matters intellectual.

I woke up with a clear vision, not only of those two chapters of the History as I should wish them written, but also of that *Castlebar* book, which, as you know, I made over nearly two years ago to Mr. Shan Bullock, and I *saw* all the scenes at Killala, Ballina, etc., with the swarms of all-but-savage yet really harmless natives, and the little scared community of Protestants with their splendid old leader, Bishop Stock, and that incongruous but most picturesque addition of the three French

officers alone in the crowd, but fresh from their experiences in Italy and elsewhere, under Buonaparte—so feeling it quite natural that they should dominate the situation.

But this is to antedate our record. Before she began *Castlebar*, which, finished by Mr. Shan Bullock, can hardly count as hers, she had given us many other volumes. Two years after *Grania* there appeared her third Irish romance, *Maelcho*, inferior to its predecessors, both as to matter and success. It had no effect with the public. But she had meanwhile written various tales which had met with a warm reception. Hitherto we have spoken of her Irish stories. But there were others. As early as 1887 *Major Lawrence, F.L.S.*, had first seen the light in *Murray's Magazine*, and it was printed later as a separate volume. It is a delightful study of a delightful man—a soldier and a naturalist, whose love of moths and sea-creatures is only once forgotten for the love of a woman, the heroine of the history. It was followed two years after by *Plain Frances Mowbray, and other Stories*, and by her own favourite *Traits and Confidences*, which carries us again to Ireland—a collection of tales and studies, chief among them 'The Adventures of an Entomologist,' already quoted. *The Garden Diary* (1901) is what it sets out to be, and something more. 'A good deal of it,' she says, 'is an attempt to lift the small natural history problems into a region where all Nature and Life (including our own) becomes, as it were, one.' And her flower-beds and borders made a good peg for Miss Lawless's thoughts. Thoughts, not fancies; fancy was not a ware Miss Lawless dealt in. She had no small change, but she carried a great deal of gold. Her *Life of Maria Edgeworth* ('English Men of Letters' Series, 1904) is almost the last prose that we have from her hand. It is not her best work; how could it be? It was written in the teeth of suffering and of sleeplessness. But if it was not a masterpiece, it was a victory; and when the odds are measured

against which it was written, the critic may well be dumb.

‘Almost the last,’ we said. Her last tale (except for *Castlebar*), *The Book of Gilly* (1906), little known and worth knowing well, concerns Ireland and Irish nature and its magic. It is the story of a child. It held the echoes of her own childhood, the dreams of later years :

Of course [she says] the little boy’s adventure is only a sort of cloak or screen to a series of small problems—as how impressions strike us while our brains are still malleable, and the contrast between the vast without and the small within is still *new*, and awakens thoughts which in the great majority of people grow so blunt and dead as they grow older that they practically cease altogether. In this respect the chapter about a modern Don Quixote and Sancho Panza is the gist of the book. One is so afraid to overburden a framework of this sort that one puts complicated ideas, which might be set forth with pomp, in the lightest fashion attainable, with the result that the majority of people overlook them altogether! That, however, is unavoidable, and if a few people, including yourself, understand, that is all that I or any other poor tamperer with the mysteries can look for.

The prose of *The Book of Gilly* recalls Emily Lawless’s poetry. And when we come to her poetry we come to that part of her which will endure. ‘With *Hurriah* and with *Grania*’ we might add, but they almost make part of her poetry. In 1902 came out *The Wild Geese*, with a preface by Stopford Brooke ; in 1909, *The Point of View* (printed privately for the benefit of the Galway fishermen) ; and, a month ago, her last volume, *The Inalienable Heritage*—privately printed also—which she was still revising when she died.

‘It is curious how much easier rhyme is to me when I am weak and disabled than prose,’ she once wrote. And so it is to her later years, her years of suffering, that we owe most of her verse. Her words sum up both its strength

and its weakness. It came naturally to her—by intuition, and sometimes by inspiration. When it did not, she could take no pains with it, and the form remained imperfect, almost rough. When it did, the words and rhythm came with a lilt and an inborn magic that had haunted her, so had power to haunt her readers. She had no pretensions and thought but poorly of her gifts :

I don't quite know what makes me write the rhymes [she wrote]; it often seems a foolish waste of time, but they come first as thoughts, mostly, and I think their ghosts tease less if one turns them into a rhyme, however rough.

And, except when she was telling a story, or (a large except) when she was drawing Nature from without and from within, her poems are almost exclusively ' thoughts ' ; hardly ever emotional, nearly always profoundly intellectual. Here again lay both her strength and her weakness. The concentration and the white heat of verse suited the expression of her ideas, but that expression often transcended her artistic faculty and broke up her metre, while she, set upon uttering her mind's conception, forgot too much that the poet must not dare to separate what he has to say from the way in which he says it. Much of her poetry remains prose moulded in the fire of poetry. She takes advantage of the warmth and the consolidating power of rhythm, but the meaning and the music are not fused into one. Equally, therefore, her prose is often poetry ; her two great gifts—that of telling a story, that of loving, knowing, painting Nature—are alike in both.

For who is the real hero of *Grania* and *Hurriah* ? The Atlantic. Who are the *dramatis personae* ? The winds and the storms—the rocks—the weather. *Grania* and *Hurriah*, the peasants and their instincts, are but part of these elemental forces, sharers of their passions, partisans or victims of their conflicts, Of course there are fine human

scenes, like the trial in *Hurriah* or Honor's deathbed in *Grania*, inseparable from the author's talent for narrative ; but in the main her characters are types : the primal peasant, the priest, the landlord, the eloquent, flinty, good-for-nothing young fisherman, or his fellow, whose Celtic romance is skin-deep and whose love of commerce and of America are fundamental. Miss Lawless did not deal in fine shades. We can see it in such stories as are not Irish—in *Major Lawrence*, *F.L.S.*, for instance. Her insight was first-rate, but it was limited ; she understood passion and egoism, intellect and instinct, and these make poetry and dramatic situations ; but she did not much explore the middle region, nor did it interest her greatly. In taste, in courage, in zeal for adventure, in intellectual curiosity, she was of the Elizabethans, and the Elizabethan literature it was that went straightest to her heart. This very absence of analysis and her instinct for romance made her stories particularly welcome to tired public men in search of refreshment. And her instinct for romance delighted because it was united to a fastidious accuracy—a rare combination, and one, whether in verse or prose, which was the distinction of Emily Lawless. She shows these qualities in her wonderful ballads : in 'Fontenoy' and the 'Dirge of the Munster Forest' (from *The Wild Geese*), and in the fiery, pathetic 'Third Trumpet' in her last volume. Her ballads are probably the poems by which she will live the longest ; their lilt and their melody were born with them and carried her over all difficulties of form. No less is her gift for precision and for dramatic effect shown by such lines as those 'To a Woman Spinning'—a poem as still as a statue, yet fraught with the tragic issues of life :

How poor thou art, and yet thou art not poor,
Oh peaceful spinner !
Ragged and barefoot, sitting at thy door,
Thou art the winner !

Thine eyes are placid, as to-day the sea,
 Thrice happy spinner !
 Content on her best cates hath nourished thee,
 A royal dinner !
 At bed and board she serves thee on her knee,
 Oh queenly spinner !
 Would that such service she would lend to me,
 Heart-broken sinner !¹

Or again, what could be more exact than this :

If He who laid down land and sea
 Still feeds the shrimp and trains the bee. . . .
 Follows the hawk-moth's devious chase,
 The lace-fly's dainty flitting grace. . . .
 Perceives the blue velella frail
 Lift from the brine its glassy sail ;
 Reckons the hydroid's countless bells,
 The coral polyp's myriad cells—
 In one immortal grasp immense
 Gathers all things of life and sense—
 May He not, oh too prudent friend,
 To your and my poor needs attend ?²

or than any one of her countless landscapes in ' From the Burren ' ; or than this in ' From a Western Shoreway '—

Wild wastes of moorland ;
 Deep pools of colour ;
 Grey tarns and tussocks ;
 Starry blue blossoms ;
 Sheets of bog-myrtle,
 Odorous with crushing ;
 Grey moths uprising,
 Ghosts of the heather,
 Others at eventide,
 Larger, more splendid,
 Peering mysteriously ;
 Bats flitting swiftly ;
 Wild storms at midnight.³

¹ ' Eighteenth Century Echoes ' (*The Inalienable Heritage*).

² ' Ignoble Ease ' (*The Point of View*).

³ *The Inalienable Heritage*.

This clear hard grip of fact and of the poetic truth which fact enshrines—this map-like vision of externals as well as of inner meanings—makes Emily Lawless's language peculiarly evocative of surroundings, of atmosphere, of weather. Weather, indeed, had an almost dramatic effect upon her, body and soul.

I wonder [she writes] has your weather been fairly kindly of late? It seems funny to write about it, yet there is nothing that makes more difference, especially when one is in sorrow and anxiety. A kindly winter sky is one of the most pitiful and tender things in all Nature, and seems for the moment a real ray of comfort. There have been times of late when the big grey trunks of — and the bracken below must have spoken to you of something even larger and more beautiful than themselves. Of course there are others when the gloom outside seems only a part and parcel of that inconvenient gloom which one *must* try to keep down.

It was because she felt thus intensely that she could so exactly recall any kind of physical impression. Even a chance phrase in her prose, such as 'October began to sicken towards November,' sets us down in the midst of a region of familiar sensations which can never be produced by vagueness. True poetry, which is the flower of reality, is built upon bed-rock; it includes matter of fact; and if it were only for this reason Miss Lawless would stand as a true poet. Perhaps to speak of this fusion of elements in her work is but another way of repeating that she united poetry with science. Together they made her religion. And this brings us to her fundamental thought.

Emily Lawless set out early in quest of truth: truth at any cost; truth to be pursued over rocks and thorns, through deep seas and arid deserts, with torn hands and lame feet, in sun and in storm; truth to be sought first in Nature, out of doors, and indoors through the microscope; then in the heart of men, past and present; truth to be

wooded, but never at the price of the least grain of sincerity. As she grew older her claims grew smaller, and she prayed to find only one little fragment, but she never gave up the quest. She had endless curiosity, and great power of enterprise. She sought the reconciliation of faith and intellect, of knowledge and belief; she sought unity with all the zest of a Humanist of the Renaissance. And she did not only seek intellectual unity, but unity with all her kind—beasts and birds and primal savages. 'Woe to us if we are so arrogant as to reject any of our humble relations,' she cries in 'Kinship.'¹

We must teach ourselves patience and reverence that we may have eyes to see 'the eternal drama wending on its way.' Thus shall we learn the true processes of evolution, without and within. That there is a region where all Nature and Life . . . are one and that it has a natural religion of its own is certain [so she writes], and I cannot but think that one gains a certain peace by submitting oneself and all those one loves to its laws. It is not an easy doctrine, and sounds perhaps a hard one, but I think there is a distinct submissiveness and a creative Will to be gained for some of us along that path that is not to be found upon any other. It does not interfere with the devotional side, that I can see, but it accepts those broad laws of Nature that we cannot honestly entirely ignore.

But her thought was kindled by something warmer—by a great and incessant aspiration after belief, and, whether foiled or bewildered, she always returned to it again. There is a poem of hers, hitherto unprinted, which is, as it were, an epitome of this aspiration. It was written by the sea :

Overstrand—Evening

June 20, 1904.

Thin red bars in the sky,
And a shore white-barred with foam,
And a single lark in the gathering dark
Singing above its home.

¹ *The Point of View.*

Out through this silent dark,
 Out to yon unseen goal,
 'Twixt those thin red bars, to the far-off stars,
 Fly forth, poor questing soul !

Seek for the final Will,
 Seek for the final Good,
 The secret seed of law and creed,
 Mistaught ; misunderstood.

What saith the Bard ?—Behold,
 In beauty's inmost lair,
 Meshed by her charms, 'neath her milk-white arms,
 Alone man 'scapes despair.

What saith the sage ?—Explore.
 Track Nature's subtlest vein,
 By care and thought ; through Law long sought,
 Thine answer may'st thou gain.

What saith the priest ?—Believe.
 All will to sin is bound ;
 No thought or care ; through anguished Prayer
 Alone may grace be found.

Back, back, poor seeking soul,
 Back from thy bootless quest,
 With wings earth-bound ; with goal unfound,
 Back to thy worn-out nest.

Thin red bars in the sky,
 And a shore white-barred with foam,
 And a single lark in the gathering dark
 Singing above its home.

Emily Lawless believed in God, but He was a remote, an intellectual God ; her knowledge of science and of the vastness of the universe removed Him far from her and from the crying appeal of man's soul. In that soul, ever seeking, never finding, victorious even in defeat, she also—and more fervently—believed. As she grew older and suffered more, as the yoke of the body pressed more bitterly upon her, and with it the necessity to free herself from its dominion, she

experienced the want of some closer union with the power outside ourselves : with the Divine. She felt the need of prayer. Not that ill-health had weakened her thinking powers, or made her more emotional ; rather had it widened her range of experience and her vision. She found what she sought in the personality of the Central Figure of Christianity ; by no means from the orthodox point of view, but taking Him as a spiritual ideal. She had for His character an adoration which acted as a force in her life, which made Him remain for her a mystery unexplained. This feeling of hers, she says, drew her near to Pascal and to his ' intense affection ' for Christ, ' of which mine, of course, is but a pitiful shadow. Yet a doubt, a doubt through it all, as to whether He was more at the very last than a *man*, only a man overtopping all other men.' ¹

She would have liked to believe more definitely than she did. There is a poem of hers, which, like ' Evening,' has never yet been printed and which would appear almost too intimate for publication, were it not that it is such an enlightening piece of autobiography that it would seem dishonest to withhold it ; were it not, also, that it may serve others in like stress, as she herself would have desired, coming as it does from one who had faced most problems—the crushing hugeness of the universe, the impotent insignificance of man. So we subjoin it just as she wrote it—perhaps in one of her nights of pain :

In the Night

Who am I? Lord, I know not ; lead me on.
 The night is dark ; no stars are in the skies ;
 All hint, all outline of the path is gone,
 And fierce and rough the sullen night winds rise.
 Where only One illumines the night,
 Do pilgrims question of His right?

¹ Miss Lawless was, of course, only considering Pascal before his conversion and his retirement from the world,

Dost thou believe that I am very God?
 I know not, Lord, I know not; lead me on.
 This much I know—that where Thy steps have trod
 Some Light still shines as it has always shone.
 Where only One illumines the night,
 Do pilgrims question of His right?

Dost thou believe then that I died for thee?
 I know not, Lord, I know not; lead me on.
 This much, no more in all the world I see,
 Where Thy Light falters every light is gone.
 Where only One illumines the night,
 Do pilgrims question of His right?

Dost thou then love Me, thou that criest so?
 I know not, Lord, I know not; lead me on.
 This much, no more in all the world I know—
 The darkness grows and I am all alone.
 Where only One illumines the night,
 Do pilgrims question of His right?

And her prose bears out her poetry. There is, in one of her letters, a passage which sums up her whole creed—her faith in Christ and in Love and in their power of inspiration :

It has grown upon me more and more to feel that though belief, in the doctrinal sense of the word, becomes yearly more impossible, more obviously human in *all* its innumerable manifestations, on the other hand Love—a clinging to something outside ourselves and not liable to accidents—becomes yearly *more* possible, and seems to me to be the one supreme truth that will some day emerge clearly above all the fog and the jar and tangle of disputing creeds. I do not know what I should do if I had the sole directing of a young ardent nature in such matters, but I feel that what I should do would be to try and get that capacity for love developed, and then let everything else take its chance.

At the lowest the Being that she had learnt to love would be the noblest and tenderest in all history, and as for miracles, the miracle of His turning the bitter waters sweet, and pulling wrecked lives straight, and that not by ones and twos, but by

millions upon millions, is quite miracle enough for me. Of course the *advocatus diaboli* will whisper that one is adoring a myth, but one must just *let* him whisper, and once the root of love is well grounded I do not think such whispers matter. The heart is a far more tenacious organ than the head, and not nearly so much at the mercy of those loud winds of Doubt.

Emily Lawless increased in the strength that helped her to draw her consolation from far away. To be a rank materialist seemed even more impossible to her than to be a rank dogmatist :

And yet [she wrote, concerning a woman's character in a novel written by a friend], I ask myself could she, being what she was, have been so wholly without the spiritual impulse? I feel so drawn to her that I a little resent her being so unable to lift her eyes *beyond* her own funeral. I do not mean not being what is called 'religious,' but having no sense of even that elemental drawing to the Beyond which comes to all but the absolutely materialised. Did you mean her to have at bottom only the sort of love for her own little graceful self and for those who appreciated her which does make up the ideal side of so many women, and lends a sort of truth to men's assertion that most women are at heart more material than they?

She was not always able to feel thus ; she had her moods of despair and of negation, generally after bodily distress, and to know her we must look at her in all her moods :

We have true Good Friday weather [she wrote on Good Friday 1905]—hard, cold, dark, cheerless, as if the world were going back into the Dark Ages and hardly any comfort remained, except that super-mundane one which one has often no courage to cling to and hardly holds with any approach to *reality*. I ought not to write so, and to you of all people, but I have been waiting for a good hour, and so far it has not yet chosen to come. . . . If there was any remedial *aim* in these degrading miseries all would be well, but mentally I cannot see it any more than in the sufferings of an owl or a rabbit caught in a

trap, though the soul of one cries out instinctively to what lies out in the great Beyond. That there is a mind and even a *heart* (the same that beat at Galilee) I am convinced; it is the little *personal* question that seems so monstrously egotistical and anthropomorphic to mix up with such issues. A gnat loved by the sun would be a feeble simile for such presumption.

But it was not her usual custom to embody these darker moments in words, and what endures in the memory of those who knew her is her more victorious note—the remarkable triumph of her strong mind over her quivering nerves :

Judging by myself [she wrote to an invalid friend], I should say that even the very worst ill-health is bearable so long as it does not entail a *suffocation* and extinction of one's powers of thinking clearly. That to me is the one really intolerable condition of things, and it is one that a complete nerve-break-down brings with it. A *partial* nerve-collapse can fight against it, and pain seems even sometimes to make the brain clearer in a topsy-turvy sort of fashion. . . . If pain and weakness have any use . . . it is that they divide true things from untrue and they leave one room to think of the few one loves, and hope (I will not say pray) for them—at any rate to love them still more than before.

. . . Do not fret for me, as we *never* have to bear more than we can stand. When that point is really passed (not fancifully) relief comes. . . . The sick souls who fight well make a little private Army Corps of their own, I think !

She had won her brevet as Captain in that Corps. Books came to her aid, perhaps increasingly, and one of those which helped her most in the last two years was the *Pensées de Pascal* :

I have been re-reading Pascal lately [she said], or rather dipping into him here and there, and am deeply touched and interested by seeing how closely his Greatness was assimilated, on the lower side of course only, to my Littleness, for he too was *accablé d'un mal de tête perpétuel*, and but for the accidental

internal colic which mercifully (for him) ended him, would have remained probably to old age, always, always suffering. . . . I find myself so close to him on the orthodox or non-orthodox side. . . . His views of the possibilities for the soul in another life are just my own, and therefore, I suppose, of most who think at all in these days—that it is a bare chance, one in a hundred, perhaps; a wager, as he says, or rather a lottery. ‘*Il faut travailler pour l’incertain.*’ There it is! And the splendour of that one chance, even for those who, like myself again, long and long for rest, and even for non-consciousness, is so tremendous that it is worth all other certainties.

It must not be supposed that the life of Emily Lawless was all endurance. Even in the last eighteen months, a time of incessant suffering, she had unexpected rallies and delightful hours of distraction. Before that, she enjoyed some leisurely spaces without pain. Nothing gave her more pleasure than the recognition which she received from Ireland when, in 1905, the University of Dublin conferred upon her the honorary degree of Litt.D., and she went in person to accept it. Her life, until 1911, was spent between England and her own land, to which she paid a long yearly visit. While her mother lived, their family plans and Emily’s health compelled them to lead a nomadic life, now in hired houses in Windsor or Wimbledon or Surrey, now in hotels abroad, where Miss Lawless was obliged to winter. But after Lady Cloncurry died these conditions came to an end, and Emily at last experienced the joy of a settled home. With her devoted friend, Lady Sarah Spencer, she settled at Hazelhatch, at Gomshall, Surrey, a charming house which they built after their own desires. And here she could indulge in the two pursuits that pleased her most—that of gardening and that of friendship. The gardening was no mere pastime. She was not only a born landscape gardener, but she worked like one. Even when she was ill, she spent hours standing or on her knees, planting,

pruning, weeding, carrying out clearances in shrubberies—on better days inventing little water-works. The labour, however hard, soothed her nerves. Who that knew her cannot see her stooping absorbed, as she handled some delicate plant with her strong, capable, maternal touch? Her plants were really like her children, each with its separate character and destiny which it was her darling work to study.

Perhaps she loved the spring-flowers best: 'Scilla and snowdrop, windflower and crocus—Brave little soldier-lads, fearless of the cold.'¹ And though she liked to go to London to see people, she could not bear to miss one of these early blossoms. 'After facing the snow for three mortal weeks, and never seeing the ground all that time, how *can* I stay away now,' she writes, 'when the scillas are all beginning to peer and there are two buds on your blue primroses?'

And who that knew Emily Lawless cannot also see her as she hurried to welcome an arriving friend: tall, almost angular, in her shady, shapeless gardening hat—a hat which seemed impatient of vanity—and her brown coat and skirt which fell in thick, rather heavy folds, almost like the carved stone dress of a Crusader's wife on some Cathedral tomb? There was something stately about her long, firm step, which did not suit with ill-health. Nor did it lead you to expect the Irish warmth of your reception. 'For unto a friend a man . . . tosseth his thoughts,' were the words she chose as the motto for *The Point of View*; and tossing her thoughts by the fireside, or in the sunlight, was to her true recreation. It was more, it was food. Her friends were, so to speak, her intellect-escapes; they removed from her the pressure of thought which often weighed down her solitude.

Not that she despised a good gossip, or an interest in personal things. They amused her, and she needed to be

¹ 'From the Burren' (*The Inalienable Heritage*).

amused—a need which often impelled her to accept invitations when bodily ease would have kept her at home. Nor was her conversation guiltless of pungent comment and of not infrequent satire. She did not suffer the stupid gladly, and she quickly showed when she was bored.

Her talk was habitually matter-of-fact and literal; it hardly ever betrayed the poet. She spoke best either about public affairs or else upon speculative problems. She was not brilliant, but she was sound—with distinction; sometimes weighty—as in her pronouncement upon the vexed question of Women's Suffrage, and of what she calls the 'wrong and unworthy anti-woman campaign':

When one knows how cruelly hard the lives of women-workers are, and how vast the numbers that are driven to daily work outside their hours (over five millions, larger than the whole population of Ireland, or Scotland, or Australia!), when she knows too how terrible a gulf of temptation yawns for the younger ones if they find the effort to live by their work too hard, it makes me most indignant that anyone should *want* to perpetuate all the barriers that have come down from a cruel old past. I have no sympathy with Suffragette methods, I need hardly say, and have personally no wish for a vote, but the helplessness of great bodies of women-workers even against *admitted* wrongs, simply because there is no one whose *interest* it is to speak for them, is too plain a fact for any fair-minded person, man or woman, to deny.

Miss Lawless's mind was always open on all sides. Knowledge attracted her, even when it lay beyond her reach.

Why do you and I not know Greek? Is it not outrageous to think of all the young donkeys and all the simpering useless dons who do? It is the only tongue that it really irks me not to know, though I know none but English and that very superficially. I have always realised that one never would really know the force of a few words unless one knew it; those 'jewels five words long' upon old Time's forefinger are more

numerous in Greek, I take it, than in any other tongue man ever spoke, though the English have not a few shining ones—cut by a lapidary called Shakespeare amongst others!

It was not often that in her letters she expressed herself at length upon contemporary literature, but when she did it was with decision :

If one sets even the very highest book that *does* smack of reality beside it [she writes of a modern novel by a woman]—say Zola's *Germinal*—any reader can see the difference in a minute. We may not know, or wish to know, the ways of French miners, and we may decline to accept Zola's special bias in favour of the one never-under-any-circumstances-to-be-omitted-act, but all the same the book is alive—an ugly beast, but a living one ; the other is not, and *never was* alive, so the fact of its smelling so disagreeably seems the more inexcusable.

Vitality was her first demand from what she read, and with reason, for to her a book could become a second existence, especially when it was written by a friend.

It is a book [she wrote to one such] to live beside one and to be opened and read whenever one wants to escape out of one's grey present into an atmosphere of flowing water and quick passing clouds and a glory of light and space. I had all that in an even more intense form in my Burren last summer, but I lay on its rocks like a sick old sheep, or a bunch of dead heather, and never wrote a *line* !

She was a warm admirer of her friends. And what a list of friends she had, English and Irish ; old friends, like Sir Henry and Lady Blake, who travelled with her about the isles of Aran when she was preparing for *Grania*, and who corresponded with her from all parts of the world ; Lady Blake's sister, the Duchess of St. Albans ; or Lady de Vesci and Mrs. Studd, the true and tried companions of so many years ; or women writers of mark among whom two became her intimates—Mrs. Humphry Ward and Mrs. Fuller—

Maitland, the author of *Bethia Hardacre's Daybook*, Miss Lawless's favourite bedside volume ; or country neighbours, like Mrs. Litchfield, and Miss Byers, and Miss Flora Russell, who lent her their constant companionship ; or her mother's friends, such as Lady Ritchie, the daughter of her admired Thackeray ; or younger people, like her niece, Mrs. Goschen, and Miss Venetia Cooper, who gave her an untiring devotion ! Their sheltering care was hers to the end, and it helped her. Nature also, whom she had so loved, did not lose the power to console. Her prayer was granted :

Oh mighty artist !
 Life's benefactor,
 Earliest and dearest,
 When shall thy joys fail ?
 Cease to enchant me ?
 Cease to soothe sorrow ?

 Only in Death.¹

Emily Lawless was that rare being, a religious Stoic. Still rarer is it that the Stoic is an artist, yet all these contrasts she combined. She was not unlike those plants she loved so well. Her bloom was born of rocks, and nourished by struggle and tempest. Her roots were deep and strong, and she could only live within earshot of the infinite sea. Her spirit loved solitude. It also loved sunlight. And if its colour and its scent did not strike the ordinary passer-by, they were there for those who chose to stoop close to her. The fragrance was crushed out of her, but it endured.

¹ ' From a Western Shoreway ' (*The Inalienable Heritage*).

'LOIZA¹

'LOIZA is 'in business,' so she tells you, 'in the jam-line.' She used to be 'in bottle-washing,' but the pay was too poor and she thought she would better herself. Now she gets ten shillings a week by making jam for eight hours a day, besides her earnings for overtime. A lady who be-friends her asked her why she would not go into service, where she would be so much better off. 'I wants my eveninks,' says 'Loiza; ' besides, servants is no better than slaves; slaves is what *I* call 'em. Look at my friend Sarah Bull, the one wot 's in the 'Orspital; she was a "general," till she went there. They was caretakers of orfices, was her master and missus—very kind people too. But they was ten in family, washin' done at 'ome, and large rooms; she 'ad to do the cookin' beside mindin' the children, and only ten pounds a year, and one day a month. She was never in bed till twelve at night, and no fun. Why, it ain't worth it, it ain't.'

'Loiza is the fourth of eight children. She was christened Eliza Leonora, as her mother was reading a penny novelette the day before her birth. Their last girl had been called Briseis, after a ship in the Docks which her father was un-loading at the time of her baptism. 'Loiza is very fond of fun—her sort of fun. She went last January to the person she calls her 'loidy-friend' to ask for a letter for the London Hospital; for 'Loiza is not strong, in spite of her fresh colour and bright black eyes, half bold, half kind, that look out from under a heavy fringe. She has had, she says, one

¹ [This article and the three that follow it were contributed to *The Pilot*.]

of her old heart-attacks. How did she get it? 'Well, it all cum along of dancin' too much on Boxin' Night. It was her chap wot treated her.' On Sunday nights she walks out with this mysterious person—indifferently called her 'chap' or her 'bloke'—a small wiry man, much shorter than 'Loiza, who wears a large check suit and a billycock hat on one side of his head. But she is proud to take his arm when they walk in the Mile End Road, the Mall of the East, and she wears her long gold plush 'paletot,' and a black velvet hat with green plumes which she hires for the evening from the shop in Cable Street, St. George's. Her paletot is held in at the back by a tasteful beetle in black jet, and the collar is pinned by a gilt heart and anchor, the gift of her adorer, to match the symbols he has tattooed in blue ink on her arm.

There are three stages in each of 'Loiza's courtships (and this is her seventh)—walking out, arming (when the lady takes the arm of the gentleman), and keeping company (when the gentleman takes the arm of the lady). 'Loiza was in the second stage. She herself 'had kep' pretty straight' with her lovers, more from rough instinct than from principle, for 'Loiza thinks little of moral backsliding in her pals. She is a great deal stricter about other things; would never dream of touching a penny that was not her own; and would give her last crust to her little brothers and sisters, or renounce a new gew-gaw to buy the baby a pelisse. She lays great stress also on church attendance, which for her embodies a social etiquette necessary to her sense of propriety. Most of her cronies, whatever their conduct, resemble her in this. Emma Finn, for instance, of 209 Fashion Alley, Spitalfields, whose career is by no means what it should be, looks deeply hurt when the 'lady-friend' asks her if she goes to church. '*I'm not Church, I'm Chapel, if you please,*' she replies with injured dignity; and 'Loiza, standing by, seems as outraged as her com-

panion. 'Loiza herself is not Chapel—she is Church. Two years ago she was confirmed : ' And I wore,' she exclaimed, ' a lovely crown of fish-bones wot my sailor-brother brought back from the Brazils.' The laying on of hands must have been, on this occasion, a lacerating discipline for the bishop.

'Loiza's serried family life (ten people in two rooms) schools her in the domestic amenities—very like those of other families translated to a lower scale. ' He swears at me, miss, as if 'e was my brother,' she once said of a young man acquaintance, and the phrase epitomises the tender privileges of kinship. On the whole she is good-tempered, if you give her sufficient latitude ; but once put her out and she may do anything. Her pleasures are simple enough—a penny ball at Wapping with her ' chap,' an extra meal of periwinkles or sausages (she calls them ' puzzles '), or a cheap excursion to Clacton-on-Sea. ' Hopping,' which accounts for the long disappearance every summer of so many of her circle, is not approved of by 'Loiza, because it keeps her too long from the shops. She describes the country as ' a deadly-come-lively place ' if she has to spend more than a day there.

'Loiza is a Robin Hood in her way, though she knows no forest save that of Epping on Bank Holidays. Yes, 'Loiza is an outlaw ; she is not, by any means, without a code of morals, but the code she has includes very few virtues and excludes very few vices. Kindness is there, and honesty, together with generosity, but truth and social morality are not yet entered on her register. There is no strongly marked line between her and the savage ; but she is an honest savage, frankly insisting on her own enjoyment—a savage with possibilities. Heroism and devotion are not unknown to the aborigines. (1900.)

'SAMUEL': CHRISTMAS EVE

'SAMUEL' was very small and very white; he held a penny in his mouth, and his coat was tattered. Though he was probably about eight, he seemed to have no age at all. He was, I think, the oldest being I have ever seen. This was not so much because of his wizened little face, but because of the astonishing dignity of his person. He appeared to possess no surname; at least the 'young lady' of the toy-shop told me that he had come there 'for years,' and that she and her colleagues had never heard of one. This namelessness, this agelessness, this inherent dignity, invested him with mystery. The power, the majesty, of remoteness was his. He dwelt aloof from others; he was after the Order of Melchisedec.

The 'young lady' informed me that, whenever he had a copper to spend, he gave the toy-shop his custom. No one knew whence he got his pennies. But while the possibilities of choice were his, Samuel, for the hour, became a king. Hence the grandeur of his bearing. Time, space, every limitation of mortality was annihilated. 'The world was all before him where to choose.'

Balzac furnished his empty attic by writing the names of beautiful objects on placards, and hanging them on his walls. They were his possessions. Quite as surely did Samuel make his own the guinea steam-engines, the bears that danced by clockwork, the opulent stables and coachman at twelve and six. In his mouth was a penny, the symbol of the power to purchase: the shop was his. But when he first entered I had seen his eye dart, bird-like, to the penny stall, and to the exact corner of it where lay the bladder air-balls (with magenta wooden sticks) that blow out with a squeak when you hold them between your lips.

There was his final choice, made long ago in the streets ; there was his predestined fate—the end which now seemed as far off as death. First there came all the fun—all the regal fun—of free-will.

He took an hour over it, moving with deliberation, and he looked at every toy on the premises. Each nook, each glass cupboard in the place, was known to him, and no one thought of disturbing him. The thing which he contemplated longest was a large Noah's ark, full of excellent beasts and birds—not the common grey wood ones, but decent, highly varnished creatures with outlines. Samuel stood with his tiny red hands in his apertures—I cannot call them pockets—and he dared the lion with the solemnity and courage of a Nimrod. 'Well, Samuel,' at last said the active 'young lady' who was serving, 'and what do you want to-day?' But she got no answer; the poor moment for actuality had not yet come; he taught her a lesson in the fitness of things.

When the hour was up, he advanced philosophically to the penny stall. There was no sense of a reverse in his deportment, no come-down-in-the-world air about him. Cinderella, who became a kitchen-maid again when the clock struck twelve, was a parvenue beside Samuel. He bore himself like a business man who has allowed himself sixty minutes for recreation and must now return to his accustomed routine. With brisk decision he drew the penny from his mouth, put it down on the stall, and, after comparing imperceptible differences of size in three magenta wooden sticks, he chose what seemed to him the longest. Then he put the air-ball to his lips, slowly blew it out, ascertained that it gave the proper squeak for his money, and departed. All this he had done with a critical sobriety and without any *joie de vivre*. Joy was over: this was business.

Samuel had early made the great, the all-important dis-

covery that Fact and Truth are not the same thing. Half the mistakes in life come from confounding the two. Fact ought to be the child of Truth ; often it is a stepchild or a changeling, unlike Truth, even hostile to her. If we worship Fact, the Truth is not in us and we shall not enjoy ourselves very much. What we call illusion is often Truth ; the poets and Samuel know that this is so. And, in so far, Samuel is a genius.

When I, too, departed with my parcels, I had got much more than three dozen toys for a Christmas tree. I had had a lesson in the art of living. (1901.)

THE CONFESSIONS OF AN AMATEUR PHILANTHROPIST

A PHILOSOPHER of my acquaintance once said that all the confusions of life arose from our taking our own normal to be that of other people. When we come to think of it, this cause is at the bottom of most of our great divisions ; the division between youth and age, the poetic and the matter-of-fact, the rich and the poor. Perhaps it is in our relations with the poor—in our philanthropic experiments—that the mistake has the worst or, at any rate, the most delusive effects. We talk to them as if their moral language were the same as our own, judge them by our standards on a reduced scale, and consequently credit them with the wrong virtues beside the wrong vices. The mischief of this is apparent especially in schools and training-homes.

Generalising is always dull as well as dangerous, and the only chance of getting at facts is for every man to come down to his personal experience. If we cannot serve as guides, we can at least be useful as preventives. Some

years ago I resolved to start a small country training-home for servant-girls—Whitechapel ‘generals’—especially such as were anæmic; not an institution, but a cottage home, where their individual needs might be provided for. A long period of East End work had convinced me that anæmia was the besetting fiend of East End girlhood, weakening vitality and undermining moral responsibility; that if its victims could be tided over its attacks in pure air, bodily and mental, they would have a better chance of becoming decent and practical human beings. As I had come to the conclusion that short changes did more harm than good, I arranged my Surrey Home to take in its inmates for at least six months, and generally for a year, after which time they were, if possible, to be placed in country situations. During their stay in the Home they were to have proper medical treatment, and the stimulus of light but regular occupation, as necessary as the right amount of rest. With this in view, I was advised to start a laundry. Benevolent neighbours promised their custom; a shed was converted—at considerable expense—into a wash-house; the season was spring-time; the ‘copper,’ the tubs, the hopeful blue starch, looked full of promise; and the little maids—so I said to myself—seemed all that was now wanting.

They came. I had resolved never to have more than six at a time; and I may here parenthetically mention that each girl cost 4s. a week for board and for all household expenses, except rent and matron’s wages; and that a cottage for seven people came to £10 a year, and the doctors’ bills added £5 to the annual expenses. They came—I repeat—sufficiently anæmic. So far so good; but in providing hygienically for their dormant energies I had not reckoned on the sort of energies they would actually possess; I had merely looked upon them as beings that must be gently roused, and, if possible, exhilarated; and it was im-

possible to foresee that when, after endless difficulties, they had washed the first batch of linen, the strange powers of anæmia would inspire them to smear the clothes with blacking. This, rather frequently repeated, soon made my scheme impracticable. The matron complained that she could not be in six places at a time ; each girl seemed incapable of ever remembering what she had learned the day before ; kind-hearted ladies were waiting for their tablecloths, and, as six matrons were as impossible as the ubiquity of one, the laundry had to come to an end. Never mind, we said, and we thought of all the axioms suitable to the occasion ; the wrongness of seeking for results ; the analogy of the slow seed in the bosom of the earth ; the need of patience, and what not. I was comforted, and came to the conclusion that cooking and housework would perhaps afford better training than the wash-house.

These occupations had the extra advantage of allowing more time for a favourite project of mine—the awakening of the Whitechapel mind to country interests ; to the sights and sounds of the woods and meadows in which the girls now went for long daily walks. I discovered also that they had a taste for learning poetry by heart, and good retentive powers—like all people, including children, whose minds contain few impressions. It seemed a good plan to associate what they learned with their new experiences, and I tried to choose simple verses descriptive of Nature, beginning with a little poem of Longfellow's on April. I explained each stanza carefully as I went along, and felt pleased with the comparatively bright expression of their faces. 'The forest-glade is teeming with bright forms': so ran one line. 'Now, tell me what *are* the bright forms you see every day in the woods?' I asked, in my most encouraging voice, my heart high with hope, for they had now been three months in the country. Amelia Gibbs put up her hand. '*Worms*, if you please, miss,' she replied,

with alacrity. Perhaps it needed this answer to show me that, without special training, Amelia and her fellows invariably walk with their eyes on the ground, unconscious of the sky and trees, so that, unless there are shops, a walk in Surrey is all one with a walk in St. George's-in-the-East. 'The feathered warblers pipe their tuneful note,' I continued; 'well,' (rather less hopefully), 'what does "feathered warblers" mean?' 'Squirrels, miss,' replied Annie de Courcy (whose Norman blood was only proved by her name); and though her response was far from the truth, it showed, at all events, that she had once noticed a squirrel.

However, I saw that it was necessary to begin on a new tack; that I had been taking my normal for their normal, allowing a margin for their inferior education. I had to conclude that I was dealing with people of deficient imagination; people who did not wish to be different, and saw no reason why they should be so; who were wholly lacking in curiosity for anything outside their restricted experience, and understood no words but their own primitive terms. How could they take any interest in a Nature with which they had not the remotest connection? The only way out of the difficulty seemed to lie in giving them some concrete share in it. With the help of a simple flower-book, I taught them a little botany and offered a prize for the best collection of wild flowers; a most successful experiment; Annie de Courcy won, and we put poetry on the shelf.

The confusion of 'normals' has a more serious effect when we come to spiritual training. It is usually considered sufficient to speak very simply on religious matters to girls of the class in question. The outcome of this in the pupils' heads is a hotch-potch of shibboleths, whose meaning they never think of asking. Again I can but refer to personal experience and report verbatim a lesson on the subject of goodness.

Myself : ' What do you mean by " goodness " ? '

Amelia : ' The grace of God, miss.'

Myself : ' What do you mean by the grace of God ? '

Amelia : ' Saying your prayers, miss.'

Myself : ' Well, what do you pray for ? '

Amelia : ' To forgive others their sins, miss.'

Myself : ' You may not have any sins to forgive. What do you pray for yourself ? '

Amelia : ' The grace of God, miss.'

After which my *da capo* question was followed by a *da capo* answer, and so on *da capo* to ' the grace of God ' once more—a cycle of phrases totally disconnected from existence. I felt some satisfaction when, a month later, I had made them dimly understand that kindness and goodness have something to do with one another. After this, I resolved in spiritual matters to try my botanical plan of making knowledge tangible, teaching them only one thing at a time, and repeating it incessantly till it became, as it were, a mechanical part of their systems. I began by taking the Beatitudes, working about a month at each of them. The result was visible, if somewhat confused. I had been trying to bring home their own share in the blessing on the pure in heart, to make them realise that they could gain it by avoiding Whitechapel temptations and Whitechapel behaviour, and I had endeavoured to explain that horseplay and kindness were not in any way identical. They were supposed to write out all that they remembered of my lesson, and I cannot do better than subjoin one of their papers, that of the Norman Annie de Courcy. At the top of her page she had written, ' Blessed are the poor in heart,' and here is the essay which followed :—

' This means that we are to turn our eyes away from ugly sights in the streets such as murders and we are to behave very kind to our young men. This is all there is to say.'

Perhaps nothing can show more clearly the foggy chaos

through which any nascent idea has to grope its way through their minds towards birth. Nelson could not have felt more triumphant than I did when, after many days, Amelia Smith, who was going to be a cook, assured me that 'thirsting for righteousness' meant taking no commission from the tradesmen.

When all, or a good deal, has been said, we come to the practical upshot. For no one has a right to talk of these matters unless he has some solution, however sorry, to offer. My own conclusion about work of this sort among girls may discourage the optimist, though perhaps it will cheer the pessimist. Results are certainly to be had, but results disproportionate to the labour. Of the forty girls who stayed in my Home, about one in every ten fulfilled the purpose she was there for and settled satisfactorily in a country situation; two or three more were partially successful and seemed to be improved creatures when they drifted back to London. 'The rest is silence.' Of course there were other and unseen consequences. An eminent worker once told me that it was enough for us in life could we make one human being happier, and, if this be so, a Home might easily fulfil this ideal. Much more than this—anything, indeed—may be effected if a saint or a genius arises for the task; one endowed with the spiritual magnetism which affects all whom it meets; or even one who is specially gifted and feels a vocation for the enterprise. Given these faculties, its success might be limitless; but the saints of to-day are as rare as the saints of old, and their work is bound to die with them. The average person has nothing but average powers with which to fight immense difficulties. He has to be constantly patching—and patching on an unknown stuff. That is the real crux. A girl comes to you, say, at fifteen, after a good deal of experience about which you have no notion; your patches may not match in colour, the cloth may be too weak to hold

them, but you have to go on, like one sewing in the dark. Perhaps too (and this may be the reason why so many homely experiments turn into big institutions) spacious and numerous rooms are almost as needful as saintliness in dealing with beings of peculiar tempers and uncivilised habits. But when all is faced, there is still a harvest for the reaper; enough to send him cheerfully on his way, so long as he has courage to know that his reaping cannot tally with his sowing.

To my humble thinking, it seems better and more practical to turn our attention towards the new material which needs no patching; to take little children, as soon after birth as possible, at any rate before they can talk, and remove them to the country. You are, it is true, confronted by the baffling complications and mystery of heredity; but you know what you are doing for the moment, and you are, at least, giving them their best chance. It may be self-indulgent to devote ourselves to the most hopeful ventures, and yet it is no less true that we do best what we do happily. (1900.)

THE ART OF CONVERSATION IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE

THE art of conversation is a theme that is never stale. So long as human beings possess the power of speech it must always remain a popular subject. The word 'conversation' has a score of different meanings to different minds. To some it signifies talking to anybody about anything; to others, only a patient listener; to others, again, the outpouring of their feelings or opinions. To the few—the happy unhappy few—good conversation is as necessary as any other luxury without which we do not really live

happily. There are certain countries as well as persons in which this need is especially strong—countries, as well as persons, apparently created to talk. If, as a modern writer has assured us, England is remarkable for the gift of character, and Germany for that of music and of metaphysics, it may be said that France alone can boast a genius for the arts of intercourse. We have of late days learned only too well, at Rennes and elsewhere, that the talent for talk is no less a bane than a blessing to the French people. But the qualities which mar a nation politically may make it socially; and the faculty for eloquent expression on any subject—for glowing interest, quick perception, and easy digression—can be traced in French revolutions and French law-courts as easily as in the salons of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The fact is that, with a Frenchman, talk—the need for immediate expression of his ideas—is a natural and almost irresistible appetite, and if he cannot satisfy it his mind is ill at ease. He speaks admirably—by grace and not by works—and whether you address a savant or the waiter at your inn, their answers are equally well expressed, and the difference lies only in their topics. The British mind is made otherwise. It moves slowly, with a stately caution—a slowness which, in itself, sufficiently explains the contrast between our notions of society and those of France. The Englishman is far from seeking, or finding, relief in utterance; he generally feels conversation to be more or less of an effort. He reserves it for dinner-time, when, if he is at his best, he is rather communicative, and, if at his worst, he knows that talking is wholesome for a man whilst he dines.

Another quality which distinguishes French society (though in public life it disappears deplorably) is that of gravity. The English are solemn, but the French are more serious than they—more serious and also more amused.

The power of being amused, never natural to the English, is to the French a part of their normal life, not only an occasional distraction. If you watch a party of ordinary Frenchmen at dinner in any provincial town (Paris is a country apart) you will find that they seldom laugh, yet are always cheerful; that they talk much with a grave animation, and are too much entertained by what passes around them, or too much absorbed by the subject of their discourse, to feel any need of making points.

A party of Englishmen, on the other hand, will laugh oftener, scoring more good stories and making more jokes, as if they needed this to rouse them from a kind of constitutional lethargy. They seem to be constantly trembling over an abyss of silence, and try to save themselves by some sort of brilliance or effectiveness; and this, generally speaking, represents their idea of good conversation. The truth is that an Englishman is permanently afraid of being dull, or of seeming absurd, and consequently is bound to become elaborate; whilst a Frenchman has no such fears, but lets himself go with the instinctive confidence of the artist, and so is essentially simple.

Simplicity is a quality which English people too easily confound with commonplaceness, instead of recognising that the one is opposed to the other, and that true simplicity acts as a preventive against the vice of talking for talking's sake. 'Good conversation,' says a charming letter-writer of recent days, 'is the talking of ordinary matters in an extraordinary way'; but by 'ordinary' she does not mean trivial, nor does she mean brilliant by 'extraordinary.' Nobody better understands the manner of saying things than the French people. Their middle-class is proverbial for its feats of housekeeping, for its savoury use of scraps and bones; and much the same gift shows itself in their conversation. They are always able to make something out of nothing, and to pass gracefully from one subject to

another, with no expense to themselves or any one else. Their reputation has been mainly founded on their wit, and it seems superfluous to say that they can be brilliant whenever they wish to. Their brilliance, indeed, has been almost too much dwelt on, to the exclusion of their better and, we maintain, more characteristic qualities: naturally enough, as what strikes the most is the most easily understood. They are far from underrating brilliance, but they give it its right place—a secondary one—and use it for ornament.

The general idea of the old French salons is one of incessant intellectual coruscation, but this is far from the truth. There certainly were occasions, and even short periods, when wit was demanded before all things, wit for wit's sake, a studied play of mind. The Hôtel Rambouillet, early in the seventeenth century, indulged in these fencing matches of brains. So, a few years later, did Madame de Lambert's salon, which was called the Bureau of Wit; or sentimental little Madame d'Épinay's, a hundred years afterwards. But the majority were 'bureaus' for ideas rather than *bons mots*; shabby rooms, very often, where men and women, inspired by intellectual ardour, really made for the truth. They did so nimbly and lightly, almost gaily, bridging over precipices with intuitions, flashing forth an epigram here and there, where it could give light, but always cognizant of the depths below them, and caring for their subjects a great deal more than for themselves. We are all familiar with Madame du Deffand's little room and its faded red curtains, first chosen to suit her complexion, then serving as a background to all the great men of her day—poets, playwrights, philosophers, the whole encyclopædic world, Fontenelle, Marmontel, and the rest. Or round the corner, at the house of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, Condorcet is stirring his audience by his views on the progress of Man and the

perfectibility of Science. Then there is Madame Necker's salon a little farther off, where the metaphysics of thought and feeling are freely discussed, and where we again meet the Encyclopædists, and a few statesmen besides.

The reasons why the salon has never flourished in England have often been discussed and never determined. We have already glanced at the chief ones, which are patent enough. French people are expansive and seek each other's company ; they have, as we said, endless energy for talking, and it acts as a safety-valve for their mercurial temperaments ; the English are hospitable but not sociable, and, apart from their inclination for silence, they think expansiveness gushing. Perhaps this is partly because the French are by nature more purely intellectual, more taken up with ideas. The true Briton does not care so much for ideas as for the working of them ; he is born practical, and, though that is an attribute which tells in good government, it is anything but a needful element in society. When we have had salons they have usually existed for some definite purpose : either political, like that at Holland House which was mainly a Whig coterie, or religious, like Lady Huntingdon's. As a rule we cannot manage a conversational circle, and even Dr. Burney, who came near it, had as much music as talk. Miss Berry is almost the only instance of a real salon hostess in the French sense of the word ; but she had been formed by French influences, her traditions were moulded by them, and her favourite guest, Horace Walpole, had also been the favourite guest of Madame du Deffand.

Perhaps the fittest equivalent to the French salon is the English country-house. Strawberry-hill in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Lord Lansdowne's Bowood, and, in more modern days, Lord Houghton's Fryston and Lady Ashburton's Grange, are all instances of the best sort of English Society. In the life of the country-house, sport, outdoor exercise, games of all sorts fill up the

spaces of the day, and intercourse is reserved for meal-times and the evening. Englishmen enjoy doing something together in silence ; and where two Frenchmen would be eagerly conferring on some interesting topic, our countrymen would be found side by side, with fishing-rods, guns, golf-sticks, or even books in their hands, wrapped in a sympathetic taciturnity.

We have had talkers as good as any nation, most of them distinguished by that generous English humour which is our own especial note. There are Lamb and Sydney Smith ; for eloquence, Coleridge ; for superficial brilliance, Horace Walpole ; as well as the wits of Queen Anne, with quaint old Selden before them, and a score of others besides. But they have all been isolated instances, leaving no tradition behind them. Even the Lake poets, who formed themselves into a circle, were a circle of exceptions—a ring of stars consorting together and ruled by their private laws. In France, Society has been much more like medieval architecture ; the names of the masons who reared the fabric are often unknown ; here and there a great master stands forth in person, but it is as the symbol of the company behind him who go on from generation to generation. Every Frenchman and Frenchwoman could, and still can, uphold the tradition of good talk ; the names of the best amongst them remain, but only as representatives of a national gift, shared, in lesser degree, by many obscure contemporaries.

It may be that we are too moral—we should say too moralising—a nation to graduate in the arts of Society ; an institution for which gracious æsthetic qualities are all-important. Our virtues are those that make for government and constitutional dignity ; for intimacy also, and for a concentrated family-life, in which silence is an invaluable element, and the routine of the day furnishes easy subjects of conversation. And yet if there were such

a person as a fairy godmother left in the world, and she would give us three wishes, the first would be that France and England might for a time exchange their talents, or at any rate some part of them. Magic, however, would probably cause many unforeseen complications—and this may be the political reason why fairy godmothers were abolished. (1900.)

JOSEPH JOACHIM: A REMEMBRANCE ¹

‘COLERIDGE is dead!’ Charles Lamb would suddenly exclaim in the midst of other conversation, during the weeks that followed the poet’s death. And those who have loved Joseph Joachim feel the need of repeating such words to make them realise that he has gone. When men have lived the life of art or goodness belonging more or less to the eternal order of things, it is more difficult to grasp their mortality. For those who care for beauty, for the best in music and in life, a link has snapped never to be replaced. Music is not dead, cannot die; but the interpreter-genius who revealed it in its purest depths has passed away.

Those who, but a few years ago, heard him still at his strongest (at his best he always was) know the utmost limit of human achievement in art. ‘Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell,’ was the feeling with which one always came away from hearing him. What was it that made his playing what it was? Was it his tone, his phrasing, the might and grace of his rhythm? Was it the wonderful union of passion and restraint? It was all these, it was something more than these. He had not drunk at the spring of inspiration, he was that spring himself. It was this fount within him which compelled him, in spite of his vital personality, to become the music that he played; to be, in turn, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven,

¹ [From *The Nation*, August 24, 1907.]

Schubert, Schumann, Brahms. Perhaps it is the heritage of his race to be the selfless testifier that he was. 'If people would only *trust* the music,' he once said; 'they too often put themselves into it.' Once when Brahms heard Joachim play again after an interval, 'I felt,' he wrote, 'that there had been something lacking in life. Oh, how he plays!'

This particular effect of his music was due not only to the musician; it came from the man. If he stands for art he also stands for goodness: for duty, for loyalty, for obedience. Not for virtue, which affects a man's relation to himself, but for the kinder, sweeter power which means his bond with others; the 'human charity' which Beethoven said was 'the only superiority that counted.' Sometimes one was even tempted to wish that Joachim's charity did not suffer so long and be kind. The most social of men, he could not reject anybody.

Of course, like all interesting people, he liked interesting people best, and men who had made their mark in the world inspired him with respect and curiosity. He was courtly without being a courtier. His feeling for the Emperor, for Royalty, was a sentiment—the sentiment that Goethe had at Weimar. Bismarck was one of the persons for intercourse with whom he had cared most, and for the last sixty years he had known most people worth knowing both in Germany and England. In the fifties he had played to Goethe's Bettina, and in his drawing-room at Berlin there hung a water-colour sketch of him and a quartet of that day, high-collared in swallow-tailed coats, playing to a little old lady, Bettina von Arnim.

But the great friendships of his life were those for Mendelssohn, the Schumanns and Brahms. His relations with Schumann began when he was very young. He had been playing Beethoven's Concerto, and he and Schumann came out together from the hot, crowded concert-room into the star-lit open. 'Little Master Joachim,' said Schumann,

looking skywards, 'do you think that star knows that you have just played the Beethoven Concerto and that I am sitting by you here?' As he spoke he laid his hand tenderly upon the boy's knee. The incident was always alive to Joachim as if it had been yesterday. Fifty years afterwards he loved to tell the story, in his vivid way, acting the gesture, recalling the tones which the years had not dulled for him. Joachim's friendship for Brahms was one of those rare comings-together which influence the history of art, like the friendship of Goethe and Schiller, of Coleridge and Wordsworth. In some ways the meeting of these two meant more than the conjunction of creators, for without Joachim it is difficult to conceive how Brahms would have been adequately revealed to the world. Joachim immediately recognised in him a sovereign of the legitimate dynasty. He himself had no mean place in the company of great composers, but, humbly putting his creative work aside, he devoted himself to the reverent interpretation of the greater masters, more especially of this last one, whom the world as yet did not understand. It was England that he found most responsive, and he reaped his reward. After forty-five years, his last pleasure in this country was to lead a performance of all Brahms's chamber-music and to witness its established success.

The difference between Joachim and other artists was that intellectual equals such as these did not spoil him for the less effectual myrmidons. But with all his kindness it would be misleading to write of him as if he were a saintly bishop, instead of the most human of human beings. He did not affect tame company; he loved good looks, he loved quick wits and brilliance. He was himself witty. His humour had a sly malice, an innocent *finesse* , and he did not object on occasions to point it at particular persons. Some one had been criticising Mr. Z., a fussy man of his acquaintance. 'But he is *such* a kind friend,' he rejoined; then,

as if by an after-thought,—‘and he always lets me know it.’ Another time, at a concert of Bach’s music, he was sitting next a lady of high rank; they were looking over the score together. ‘She pointed out the beauties that were there—and some beauties that were not there,’ he remarked afterwards. But his vision of their weaknesses did not at all interfere with his liking either for Mr. Z. or the lady. His satire was never discourteous. He was asked if a woman of note—a reputed liar—were untruthful, as was supposed. ‘Let us call it romantic,’ he answered; ‘she was a very attractive person.’

The difficulty in defining Joachim, the most unparadoxical of persons, is to bring home to those who did not know him the union in him of simplicity and subtlety, of dignity and spontaneity, of a warmth that thrilled its recipient and a dislike of extravagance and excess; to make men realise the fulness of his artist’s temperament, together with the qualities least supposed to belong to an artist. Joachim’s punctiliousness, his self-control, his good manners, his good sense, his distaste for what was not obvious, his still greater distaste for what was lawless, are not the attributes usually pertaining to the popular idea of a genius.

We have said that he gave up composition. It was not only to interpret the work of others that he did so. It was to fulfil his mission as a teacher. Those who have had the memorable good fortune to watch him among his pupils at his Hochschule, to see him conduct his orchestra, a king whose kingdom was youth; those who have witnessed his patience with all who did their best, his wrath with what was lazy or slovenly, understand how he spent himself for them. Of his sovereign kindness to young musicians there are many stories to tell. He loved young life; he exacted nothing from it. ‘Am I boring you, children?’ he asked some girls a little time ago, while he was playing Mozart.

Not only among his scholars was Joachim a king. There

is a picture of him fresh before my eyes, when once, after a festival at Bonn, he was returning from a *Festfahrt* on the Rhine. As he stepped off the boat a crowd received him, and he passed up to the town between two files of cheering people—undergraduates, tradesmen, Herr Doktors, English pilgrims, friends of all sorts. He had not expected an ovation; he was moved almost to tears as he walked between the ranks with royal simplicity; and

Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Followed this wondrous potentate.

Yet the most enduring image of him, the one which lives for ever in our hearts, is the image of Joachim the player, standing by himself, or sitting with his quartet, his Jovian head straight to the audience. The massive hair, the watchful eyes, the wonderful square, supple hands, from which virtue went forth, complete the man. He is surrounded by an atmosphere of concentration. His face wears a look of tension, a patient, almost troubled expression. Then the mighty bow is upraised, the Olympian fiddle poised against the shoulder, and the first attack holds us breathless. The tension disappears from his countenance; it becomes calm with a victorious serenity, with a rare intellectual force. There is no exaltation, no throwing back of the head, no common sigh of emotion or excitement. But the eyes are transfigured with a spiritual light; the face is pervaded by an intense reverence.

The impression belongs to many places: to the Ducal Schloss at Meiningen amidst the green Thuringian hills; to the hall in the humble Yorkshire village at whose festival, amongst the moors, he liked to play; to the grim, smoking towns of the Black Country; most familiarly to St. James's Hall, where he reigned so long.

Once, at the rehearsal of a concert in that little York-

shire village, he was sitting deep in talk with a friend. The last singer had finished her performance, but he did not perceive it. He looked up, and discovered that he was waited for. 'It is *my* turn now ; I must go,' he said, concerned, almost as if he were a child hastening to obey his master's call. His turn *has* come now—the call found him ready.

THE LETTERS OF A SAINT¹

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA, as seen in her Letters. Translated and edited, with introduction, by VIDA D. SCUDDER. (Dent. 6s. net.)

CATHERINE of Siena was that rare creature, a practical mystic. She was the youngest of twenty-five children and never quarrelled with any of her brethren; she lived in a small house with a fretful old mother, tending her to the last, when no one else in the family would be burdened; she nursed the most difficult cases in the hospital; she was a forcible diplomat after a theocratic fashion—more of a diplomat than a stateswoman; she brought Gregory XI. back from Avignon, and reconciled the differences between the Romans and Urban VI. Perhaps it was her good sense as well as her wisdom that gave her such a hold upon Sir John Hawkwood, the English free-lance in the service of the Pope, and produced in him such tangible results as his efforts to check the massacre at Cesena. She must also have had a personal charm which only her presence could convey. There is no more striking story than the one which she tells herself (in her letter to Fra Raimondo of Capua) of her visit to the prison where the young nobleman Niccolo Tuldo lay awaiting execution because he had spoken critically of the Sienese Government. He was among the gayest of worldlings, and was plunged in abject fear at the thought of death. Before Catherine left him he was as one enamoured of it, and he said that 'it would seem to him a thousand years' before he arrived at the scaffold. He stipulated

¹ [This article and all those that follow it were contributed to the *Times Literary Supplement*.]

that she should be there, and she knelt with him at the block, putting her head down beside his till he died joyously, saying 'Catherine.'

No remote hermit saint could have effected this, and Catherine Benincasa, as her present biographer so well indicates, was first and foremost a woman of warm sympathies. She is always emphasising the secondary importance of penance and of all else beside the power of loving. And she was humble with that humility which makes fellowship. It is a wasteful fact in moral economics that the people who least possess sin are always most convinced of it. Catherine was full of this conviction. She wore the roughest clothes; she lived on lettuces and water—not, as she is careful to tell us, from any asceticism, but because her fasts in early life had made any other food impossible to her. Yet when she is writing to a fashionable widow, she speaks of herself as if she were the slave of vanity and luxury. And this was all because, when she was twelve years old, her sister had dressed her up in a grand gown and had bleached her hair according to the mode then prevailing. She never quite lost her misery at having allowed this. Such feelings may seem to us overstrained, but they gave her a grip over the morbid and depressed. Already, when she was six years old (in 1353), she aimed at living like the Fathers in the desert. Her father, one Benincasa, was a poor dyer, and it was a long time before he recognised that his baby was inspired. But when she was sixteen she was allowed to become a Dominican tertiary—that is, a devout woman living in her own home, under religious rule. If she had raptures of contemplation, strange visions, and trances in which some of her letters were written, and if she underwent a fictitious mystical death, she also faithfully performed the lowliest household tasks and ministered to plague-stricken Siena. Eleven grandchildren did old Monna Lapa Benincasa harbour in

her house while the epidemic raged. Eight of them died of the pest, tenderly nursed by Catherine, and over each, as she herself buried it, 'This one at least I shall not lose,' she said. 'Her reputation increased. A group of disciples gathered round her . . . and she became known as a peacemaker. At the same time . . . her unusual mode of life excited criticism and suspicion.' She was, as time went on, inspired by two great ideals: the reform of the Church, and the creation of a great Imperial theocracy, ruled by the Pope, and including not alone Italy but Christendom—an organised brotherhood of all men. To bring these dreams to pass she told scathing truths in high places, for none had a keener eye or deeper regret than she for the ecclesiastical corruption that surrounded her—the eye and the regret of a Savonarola, as Miss Scudder truly shows. For these ends, too, she went to Avignon, the accredited ambassador of the rebel Florentines, charged to make peace with the Pope. She failed, but she brought him back to Rome—to find him alienated by her plain speaking. Tradition even says that upon his deathbed he warned the bystanders against her. But she was not daunted. His successor, Urban VI., who set about the work of reform, but with a most unwise violence, was exhorted, was scolded by her, now roughly, now with feminine grace—as when she tried to teach him tact by symbols, and sent him a present of bitter oranges gilded outside and candied within. And she died in the midst of her vain attempt to heal the great schism which began under his reign when Robert of Geneva became anti-Pope.

Mystics are not good letter-writers, for mystics are bound to be without humour, and Catherine's are all religious letters full of obscure and jarring medieval imagery. But they are human documents. She only learned to write by miracle three years before her death, and until then she employed young aristocrats as secretaries. Her correspond-

ence was wonderfully varied. 'She wrote to prisoners and outcasts; to great nobles and plain business men; to physicians, lawyers, soldiers of fortune; to kings and queens, and cardinals and popes; to recluses . . . and to men and women of the world.' To the dilatory and craven she could be an awful correspondent, as when she advises the sensitive and shrinking Pope Gregory to resign the Holy See if he cannot be 'a manly man'; or when she shows her disappointment in her peace-loving confessor, Fra Raimondo, whom she sends forth as a matter of discipline on a dangerous errand to the French King, but who turns tail when he reaches Genoa, at the first sight of the anti-Pope's sails on the sea. To her niece, too, Eugenia, a nun, she was rather a formidable aunt. 'Be as savage as a hedgehog,' she writes to her; 'go to confession . . . and when thou hast received thy penance, run!'—a drastic comment on current morals. But to 'Nanna, a little maid, her niece, in Florence,' she sends a letter full of tenderness. 'A heart ought to be like a lamp,' she says; 'thou seest that a lamp is wide above and narrow below, and so the heart is made, to signify that we ought always to keep it wide above through holy thoughts and holy imaginations.' 'I wish you to have the cell of the heart always, and always to carry it with you,' she writes to another correspondent, and that is the keynote of her teaching. She is very severe upon the hermits who refuse to come when summoned to Rome. 'Apparently God is an acceptor of places, and is found only in woods,' she exclaims, with that irony which is a holy form of humour. 'There is a tree of love, whose pith is patience and good will towards one's neighbour,' is another saying characteristic of her. And so is this brief phrase, 'Nothing happens without mystery,' with which any account of her might well end.

Miss Scudder has done her task admirably, both as translator and as editor. Her biographical introduction,

containing much in little, full of thoughtful charm and fine perception, makes us wish for more work from her hand. So do the explanatory notes which preface each letter and exhibit real research and scholarship. Her pages are quickened by occasional touches of a happy humour which makes the people she sketches alive to us. If she sometimes sees more in these letters than we do, that is only because she reads Catherine herself into them. She understands goodness—no easy matter. ‘Goodness,’ she says, ‘despite a curious prejudice to the contrary, admits more variety in type than wickedness, and produces more interesting characters.’ (1905.)

A MEDIEVAL GARNER

A MEDIEVAL GARNER. Human Documents from the four centuries preceding the Reformation. Selected, translated, and annotated by G. G. COULTON. (Constable. 21s. net.)

WE already owe happy memories to Mr. Coulton. Those who read *From St. Francis to Dante* are likely to remember him, and perhaps the first thing they remember will be, not only his wide knowledge, but the vivid warmth of his learning. It is characteristic of him that he has got the words ‘Human Documents’ into his title-page, for human he is before all else, and that is the quality which distinguishes his work from that of most other medievalists. ‘The records here printed,’ his preface tells us, ‘represent thirty years’ study among all kinds of medieval writings. . . . They treat of clergy and laity, saints and sinners, spiritual experiences, love, battles, pageants, and occasionally the small things of everyday life.’ Most of them are translated, and for the first time, from often ‘inaccessible volumes’ and from six different languages. The result is a living picture of those centuries of strange and

coloured medley which we call the Middle Ages—of the generations which stretched between the day of St. Louis and that of Luther; and the delightful illustrations here given us make no small part of our enjoyment. At Mr. Coulton's word, the stagnant sea of monkish chronicles gives up its dead, and Jacques de Vitry, Vincent de Beauvais, Godefroid de Bouillon, Caesarius of Heisterbach, Petrus Cantor, Christina von Stommeln, Peter of Sweden, Ulrich von Lichtenstein take their place beside the better-known names of St. Bernard and St. Bonaventura, Froissart, and Walther von der Vogelweide.

It was a time of strong contrasts: of violent sin and violent goodness; of ecclesiastical majesty and monastic puerility; of profound learning and crass stupidity; of infantine gaiety and sudden tragedy; of flashing fortunes and swift dooms—crowns and conquest on the one hand, battle and murder and sudden death on the other. And over all, good and bad alike, there shines the light of early morning and the naïveté of childhood. 'So it was as though the very world had shaken herself and cast off her old age, and were clothing herself everywhere in a white garment of churches'—thus wrote the monk Ralph Glaber, who died at Cluny about 1044. There is a kind of innocence about the very sinners of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the angular *gaucherie* of their woodcuts transmits itself even to their crimes. Many of their problems, indeed, arose from the fact that this same childlike candour was allied to the unworn forces of full manhood; many others from the terrible intensity of their literalness, from the way in which, if the paradox be allowed us, they applied their imagination to that literalness until they turned it into remorseless cruelty. Logic is an appalling weapon in the hands of crude conscience. Ste. Douceline, who never took off a rough shirt of pig-skin, pressed into her flesh by a coat of mail, and whose life was one long chapter

of charity and pious ministration, thought nothing of beating black and blue a little girl of seven who had dared to raise her eyes to a man's face ; and this did not mean that she was more merciless than we are, but only that she had a clear material vision of damnation and knew that a birch-rod was better than the prongs and pitchforks to come. The strength and the weakness of her contemporaries was that heaven and hell were all about them, and this vivid presence of bliss and torment accounts for many apparent incongruities. If it gave rise to floggings, it also caused unexpected indulgence. When a monk who disbelieved in Transubstantiation confessed his doubts to St. Bernard and remained unconvinced by the saint's arguments, instead of applying the rod of discipline, his master only answered : ' What ! a monk of mine go down to hell ? God forbid ! If thou hast no faith of thine own, yet in virtue of thine obedience I bid thee go take the Communion with my faith.' The monk obeyed, and, ' straightway enlightened by the holy Father's merit, he received a faith in the sacraments which he kept unspotted even to the day of his death.' St. Bernard's horror of hell, the burning positiveness of his belief, wrought what we should now pronounce to be a cure by suggestion—what in less clinical days men simply called a miracle.

The Host was often the centre of their wonder-tales, of some of their divinest puerilities. St. Francis himself might have left us Caesarius of Heisterbach's story of the bees :

It is somewhat pitiful that we men, for whose salvation this sacrament was instituted, should be so lukewarm about it, while brute beasts, worms, and reptiles recognize in it their Creator. . . . A certain woman kept many bees, which throve not, but died in great numbers ; and, as she sought everywhere for a remedy, it was told her that if she placed the Lord's Body among them, this plague would soon cease. She therefore went

to church and, making as though she would communicate, took the Lord's Body, which she took from her mouth as soon as the priest had departed, and laid it in one of her hives. Mark the marvellous power of God ! These little worms, recognizing the might of their Creator, built for their sweetest Guest, out of their sweetest honeycombs, a tiny chapel of marvellous workmanship, wherein they set up an altar of the same material and laid thereon this most holy Body ; and God blessed their labours. In process of time the woman opened this hive, and was aware of the aforesaid chapel ; whereupon she hastened and confessed to the priest all that she had done and seen. Then he took with him his parishioners and came to the hive, where they drove away the bees that hovered round and buzzed in praise of their Creator ; and, marvelling at the little chapel with its walls and windows, roof and tower, door and altar, they brought back the Lord's Body with praise and glory to the church.

It seems rather arbitrary after this that another woman—Hartdyfa of Cochem—should have tried the same means to improve her cabbages, and in consequence have been made a demoniac for life, although her cabbages duly grew and flourished. Whatever their reasoning powers, reason was not the strong point of the Middle Ages ; or, rather, again like children, they kept their reason apart from their imagination and let these two powers run on parallel lines which never met.

The simplicity which solved so many of their mental problems greatly complicated their daily life. It was riddled with superstitions, weighed down by omens and shibboleths. Sometimes they added sweetness to existence ; as when St. Bernard ' rode abroad in the morning.' For when he saw boys keeping their flocks in the fields, he would say to his monks, ' Let us salute these boys, that they may answer to bless us,' and then, ' armed with the prayers of the innocent,' he travelled on, feeling that good luck attended him. Sometimes they added terror. There were

savage curses from the pulpit—sickening rumours of the doom that befell such as misused the Host or the Chrism; or ‘prepared a table with three knives for the service of the fairies, that they may predestinate good to those born in the house’; or ‘believed that good or evil came to them from the croak of a jackdaw or raven, or from meeting a priest, or any animal whatsoever.’ Unreadable, too, is the fate that overtook the unfortunate villain who once played at hazard in the church porch below the Virgin’s statue, and, having lost his game, broke her image. The heavenly powers were not often Christian in their conduct. Yet even the current cruelty, the barbarity of the medieval imagination, had its good side. Men were not stalked by fear in those days, as they are now. Pain and death took their proper place among the common risks of every day, and even torture and punishment accustomed the world to the thought of the great central facts of being. Life, we repeat, was full of contrast, and so it was full of interest and of poetry; of enchanting detail, too, for the men of those times were fresh in observation and expression, and blessed with a vigorous joy of life. Their existence was not unlike one of the pages of their missals—clear black and white type in the middle, and now and then a splash of red and gold; with a border of infinite fancy, rich in birds and beasts and flowers and goblins; here a pitcher or a spade, there, next to emblazoned matter-of-fact, an angel’s head or mystic emblem.

We are constantly reminded of St. Francis, of Giotto, of Chaucer, of Boccaccio, as we turn Mr. Coulton’s pages; of the literature of later days, too—the satires of the Renaissance and the Reformation; for the stories and jokes against the monks were much the same in the thirteenth century as those of Erasmus and Ulrich von Hutten. And what wonder when, apart from immorality and gluttony, the clergy had to be reproved for such pastimes as dropping

tallow on those below them during service-time ; or when, at a solemn council, the Archbishop of York, who was jealous of the Archbishop of Canterbury, sat down roughly in his lap, then struck him with his elbow, the whole business ending in a violent scuffle ? It was at any rate an effective method of ending an ecclesiastical dispute ; some of us may even prefer it to more modern constitutional methods. Many are the types of clerks and of others contained between these two covers. Thin priests and fat friars, crafty jongleurs and shrewd peasants, green-robed ladies of exquisite fidelity, ladies in red mantles lined with vair, on their way to much-needed confession, visionary nuns emaciated by torments from imaginary devils, knights wasting with love or fed with capon, others pure enough to see the Holy Grail, jostle one another on the road—the high road of the Middle Ages. Sometimes we find an unexpected type, like the Countess Yde, the mother of Godfrey of Bouillon—a mother *à la* Rousseau. She was so angry when an attendant allowed her hungry child to be nursed by one of her ladies while she herself was absent at Mass that

All her heart shook ; for the pain that she had, she fell upon a seat. . . . Swiftly she flew, all trembling with rage, and caught her child under the arms : the child of tender flesh, she caught him in her hands, her face was black as a coal with the wrath that seethed within. . . . There on a mighty table she bade them spread out a purple quilt, and hold the child : there she rolled him and caught him by the shoulders, that he delayed not to give up the milk which he had sucked. Yet ever after were his deeds and his renown the less, even to the day of his death.

Now and again we get a subtler psychology, from the surprising pen, for instance, of Ekkehard Junior (980-1060) in his description of 'The Three Inseparables' :

I will tell you now of Notker, Ratpert, and Tutilo, since they were one heart and soul, and formed together a sort of trinity

in unity. . . . Yet, though so close in heart, in their natures (as it often happens) they were most diverse. Notker was frail in body, though not in mind, a stammerer in voice but not in spirit; lofty in divine thoughts, patient in adversity, gentle in everything, strict in enforcing the discipline of our convent, yet somewhat timid in sudden and unexpected alarms, except in the assaults of demons, whom he always withstood manfully. He was most assiduous in illuminating, reading, and composing. . . . But Tutilo was widely different. He was strong and supple in arm and limb . . . ready of speech, clear of voice, a delicate carver and painter . . . a crafty messenger, to run far or near . . . he had a natural gift of ready and forcible expression . . . so that the Emperor Charles (the Fat) once said, 'Devil take the fellow who made so gifted a man into a monk!' But with all this he had higher gifts: in choir he was mighty, and in secret prayer he had the gift of tears. . . . Ratpert, again, was midway between the other two. Master of the Schools from his youth, a straightforward and kindly teacher, he was somewhat harsh in discipline, more loth than all the other Brethren to set foot without the cloister.

Besides official documents and sermons—the least impressive part of the book, for even those of St. Bernardino seem to us of to-day neither very spiritual nor edifying—the extracts before us consist mainly of monkish records of tales of war and tales of love. Of the last-named sort there are many, and one of the most striking is that which chronicles the long hardships endured by a certain Ulrich in the service of his lady—among them, before he had ever spoken to her, an operation for a hare-lip, for she would not look upon him while he had it. 'I will not cut thee before the month of May,' said the surgeon—but when the month of May came, cut him he did. 'Masterlike he cut me, and manlike I bore it all,' said Ulrich. If the accompanying woodcut showing an operation be accurate, then Ulrich had enough to bear; for the surgeon is jumping in the air, so as to come down with more force upon the patient

meekly sitting with a neat bowl ready upon his knee. Ulrich seems, indeed, to have had a morbid taste for surgery, for later he sent his finger to the lady as a love-token. But she still resisted his blandishments, deceiving his hopes again and again, till, tired of her platonic wiles, he transferred his heart to some one else.

And if among the stories of war Froissart's pages stand out far beyond the others, so in the region of love Walther von der Vogelweide reigns supreme. He seems to be the only man among the many medieval writers on the subject who gets beyond romance and into poetry. The vision of the ideal love he never found has a touch of Dante, some hundred years before Dante lived; and, apart from love, his poem on despondency has the lyric touch so rare in his day. 'Hath this life of mine been but a dream, or is it true?' so sings Walther von der Vogelweide. It is the question that we ask about the Middle Ages as we close Mr. Coulton's volume. The best part of them, like all best dreams, is true—their gaiety, their courage, their confidence, their faith. These things are the heritage they have left us. (1910.)

QUEENS, KNIGHTS, AND PAWNS

ELIZABETH AND MARY STUART. THE BEGINNING OF THE FEUD.
By FRANK A. MUMBY. (Constable. 10s. 6d. net.)

THE name of frailty is not woman. Or should we say frailty is strength? The old, new story of Elizabeth and Mary Stuart seems to prove as much. Mary Stuart was frail, but she knew it, and her astute brain used her frailty as a double-edged tool—as the strongest asset she possessed in her game of intrigue. Elizabeth was not frail; she regretted it, and pretended that she was. And this pretended frailty was, likewise, a barbed wire; it was the

strongest defensive weapon in her armoury. By dint of it she organised her coquetries—her military manœuvres of flirtation. By dint of it her right hand could receive regal ermines from Prince Eric of Sweden while her left hand was held out to the Archduke Charles, who ‘had a head larger than that of the Earl of Bedford, and was unfit to govern.’ By dint of it she sailed, not near, but across the wind, with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and was able to trample underfoot the ugly rumours that blasted her reputation at home and abroad after the backstairs tragedy of Amy Robsart. By dint of it, perhaps, she was able to dominate the qualms of her own strange heart, and turn her inclination for Leicester, compounded of feeling and of vanity, into an inspired move on her chessboard, a means of delaying the vexed question of succession. She behaved as she pleased.

In the afternoon (wrote the Spanish Bishop of Quadra, then in England, to his master Philip II.) we went on board a vessel . . . and she (the Queen), Robert, and I being alone on the gallery, they began joking, which she likes to do much better than talking about business. They went so far with their jokes that Lord Robert told her that, if she liked, I could be the minister to perform the act of marriage, and she, nothing loath to hear it, said she was not sure whether I knew enough English.

Elizabeth, like most great players, had herself invented her game, and, like most great women players, had invented it to suit her own character. It was the game of political mystification; and she could not have played it so well had not her rival, Mary Stuart, lived across the border to stimulate her. It was an age of leading women—Catherine de’ Medici ruled in France, and Margaret of Parma in the Netherlands. It is the more remarkable that these two Queens, of England and of Scotland, should have taken up such a large part of the stage, and that they should have

held it for so long. Women were never so powerful as then, when they were most personal; when conflict meant no civic rights or civic arms, but a duel with the rapier they wielded with such consummate skill—the blade of feminine intuition. And these two have fascinated posterity for more than three hundred years, just because their fight was fought with common instincts upon an uncommon scale. Mary was primitive and emotional; Elizabeth was primitive and intellectual, so intellectual that her natural desires were often hidden. But her vanity was perhaps greater than that of Mary, or else she had more need of it, her charm being less. ‘She took M. de Montmorenci with her right hand and M. de Vielleville with the left, and they walked in the private orchard for more than a full hour, her Majesty speaking with them most sweetly and familiarly in French, as readily as she does Italian, Latin, and Greek, all which tongues she uses at pleasure, and in so loud a tone as to be heard by everybody.’ Thus writes an eye-witness. Elizabeth wished to be overheard, Mary did not—a significant point of variance. ‘Monsieur l’Ambassador,’ said Mary, ‘. . . I like not to have so many witnesses of my passions as the Queen your mistress was content to have, when she talked with M. D’Oysel.’ Mary lived in an atmosphere of secrecy. Her sleeping eyelids that veil her all-seeing eyes are as the sentinels of mystery. But there are more important differences between the two protagonists. Of the three Queens then most prominent, Mary Stuart strove for herself and her throne by means of her relations with men; Catherine de’ Medici strove for her dynasty—an enlarged self—by means of plots and policies; Elizabeth strove for herself in her nation without distinguishing the one from the other, and she did so by means of deliberately choosing the right Ministers and deliberately discarding them. Mary failed, and lost her head, because she could not believe in anything outside personal issues. Catherine

succeeded for thirty years and then failed for want of a large outlook. Elizabeth succeeded because, almost unconsciously, she gripped main purposes. Yet Mary, who put her faith in her power over men, has not been cheated. She has kept it; they are still fascinated against their reason; she can still set them by the ears. And Elizabeth, too, continues to achieve what she made for. She is part, not of men's hearts, but of the Empire—the Imperial votaress who herself has passed on but has left us an enduring heritage.

Mary has one great claim upon posterity which Elizabeth does not possess. The Queen of England did not, it seems she could not, suffer. The Queen of Scotland could and did. She had a heart, even though it was a bad heart; while Elizabeth seems to have possessed nothing nearer to one than a warm vanity. There was little love in her love-affairs. 'She more resembled Hippolyte than Phaedra,' as Roger Ascham put it, in a style which pedantry urged into impropriety. Her inhumanity to women knew few bounds; and as for her cruelty towards Catherine Grey, who was guilty of marrying without her knowledge and of owning a title to the Crown, it repels one even more than her conduct towards Mary, especially after reading Catherine's broken-spirited letters in this volume. She cut off people's hearts, if she did not cut off their heads. Mary Stuart's tears were burning tears, at all events when her young French husband died. 'You have comforted by your letters the most afflicted poor woman under heaven,' she wrote sincerely; and, in reading her letters and those of Elizabeth and Elizabeth's envoys, a conviction is thrust upon us that, had Elizabeth been kind, the course of history would have been different. Mary was susceptible, and susceptibility implies an inward chord which answers, whether to good or to evil. When Elizabeth was false, so was Mary. And she understood how to administer her

falsity with all the arts of feline amenity. 'The Queen, your mistress, doth say that I am young, and do lack experience; indeed I confess, I am younger than she is, and do want experience; but I have age enough and experience to use myself towards my friends and kinsfolk friendly and uprightly.' And 'If your mistress will use me . . . as her natural born sister or daughter,' could have been no soothing phrase in the ears of the elder Queen. Yet, in spite of the claw in the velvet glove, Mary could at times be almost childishly direct, as Elizabeth never could be. 'To say that we may for all that live friends, we may say and promise what we will, but it will pass both our powers,' Mary said of herself and her rival. It is always amazing to realise the odds she fought against, from Elizabeth's inclement refusal to grant her a safe-conduct through England on her way from France to Scotland, onwards through the years of craft and of espionage woven around her like a web, as the letters and journeys of envoys to Cecil and to Leicester testify. And untold harm was wrought upon her ribald, dashing spirit by the grim rigours of John Knox—his 'lenity and dulciness,' as he called them, in his nervousness for his own salvation. 'He knocked so hastily upon her heart that he made her weep,' wrote Sir Thomas Randolph to Cecil; but 'there be of that sex,' he added cautiously, 'those who will do that as well for anger as for grief.' All these 'knockings' played a part in Mary's destiny, and pushed her into the excitement of intrigue and of passion. Mr. Mumby is right to dwell upon the fact that in the midst of the immoral French Court there was no breath of scandal upon her name, and that it was her infatuation for Darnley that first woke in her the fire that would not be quenched. That infatuation for the 'long,' arrogant boy, so much her junior, was as bewildering to bystanders as was that of Titania for Bottom. 'She is now so much altered from what she lately was that who now

beholds her doth not think her the same,' wrote Randolph to Leicester. 'Her Majesty is laid aside; her wits not what they were—her beauty another than it was. . . . The saying is that surely she is bewitched.'

Politics, from which Randolph wished to retire with 'a good old widow,' were worth while then, because politics were personal. The Constitution was a growing power and it weighed as a lever and a drag; but the real vitality of statecraft lay in the interplay of character at a time when life was still fraught with primal risks, and yet men had found complete self-expression in words rich and fresh from the mint. Mr. Mumby has done us a great service. He has found the right way to teach history—when no historian of genius is alive; he gives it to us in a series of admirably chosen letters from records, archives, books; he weaves his mass of material with signal skill into a sequent narrative, and he connects the letters by lucid paragraphs of his own. This is all we get of himself; yet, without acting showman, he provides a clearer sight of his subject than any drum or trumpet could secure us. (1914.)

VINCENT DE PAUL

THE MYSTERY OF THE SAINT

VINCENT DE PAUL, PRIEST AND PHILANTHROPIST, 1576-1660.
By E. K. SANDERS. (Heath, Cranton and Ouseley. 16s. net.)

THIS book is not among the throng of nice needless books, half historical, half personal, which daily fill the bookseller's counter. Vincent de Paul—the religious, the practical genius; the organiser who saw that organisation was fruitless without charity, and charity helpless without organisation; the evoker of one of the noblest bands of missionaries

at home and abroad that the world has ever seen ; the creator of the Sisters of Charity, of homes for deserted babies, of the hospital for the galley-slaves ; the philanthropist who was yet a mystic living in a land of prayer—has long demanded a biographer and, by a rare stroke of luck, has found the right one. This author is not among the many subject-hunters of to-day, the soul-snatchers rifling graves of persons whose gifts might fill a dozen pages, for the sake of gossip best left under the sod. She seems to the casual reader to have long hoarded her subject in her heart, and to have found in herself some secret response to St. Vincent's spirit. Miss Sanders possesses the gift of spiritual insight, and that is the one gift demanded by her theme—demanded, indeed, by the whole seventeenth century, that age of spiritual dissatisfactions and satieties, of conversions, of sinners and the saints whom they call forth. It is this spiritual vitality which renders the seventeenth century far more interesting than the much-exploited eighteenth, which is so fundamentally matter-of-fact in spite of its sensibilities, so easy of general access in its wit and its love affairs (without anything to hide even its scandals), with Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Encyclopædists to guard it instead of Pascal, St. François de Sales, Bossuet, Fénelon, St. Vincent de Paul.

This volume, from first to last, brings us straight up against that most perturbing question, 'What is a saint ?'—the question which, whatever the inquirer's creed, is bound to make him ill at ease. A saint, it might well be answered, is an enthusiast for goodness. But enthusiasm is generally thought of as something glowing and vague, the greater because it is vague. Not so was it in the eyes of a St. Vincent. To him enthusiasm was a steadily stoked furnace, needing both an altar and a stoker who would never for a moment relax his efforts but feed the flames with his own heart. The other kind of enthusiasm

St. Vincent distrusted. 'I desire,' he wrote, 'to make it my practice to undertake nothing and to decide nothing while I am full of . . . enthusiasm.' But his life expresses something he never said—that a saint is, above all, one who enjoys; he enjoys holiness as the artist enjoys beauty. Nothing, after all, is done well, still less transmitted, without enjoyment; no force is negative. And the saint is no mere renouncer, no ascetic, save as a means to an end. No practice of goodness in him grows stale by becoming a habit. A discipline it may be, but it is touched, often burnt, by fire from heaven. He takes such delight in Love that the blows he suffers in its service are as nothing beside his inward joys.

My daughters [said St. Vincent to the Sisters of Charity], we are each like a block of stone which is to be transformed into a statue. What must the sculptor do to carry out his design? First of all he must take the hammer and chip off all that he does not need. For this purpose he strikes the stone so violently that if you were watching him you would say he intended to break it to pieces. Then, when he has got rid of the rougher parts, he takes a smaller hammer, and afterwards a chisel, to begin the face with all the features. When that has taken form he uses other and finer tools to bring it to that perfection which he has intended for his statue. . . . God treats us just in this way.

And humility, he teaches, is the basis of a good man's life. He must be humble even before he renounces: humility may even oblige him to renounce renunciation. 'Humble yourself before God, recognising that you are nothing save a useless tool who may spoil everything'—such was his counsel to a 'Superior' with regard to the priests in his charge. And of himself, 'Tout le mal qui se fait à la Mission,' he said, 'dites que c'est Vincent qui le fait.' None had felt more sharply the piercing thorns of humility or so deeply knew it to be the attitude of man

towards God, not, like modesty, the attitude of man towards man. And none maintained more severely the sincerity that this attitude demanded, sustained, as Miss Sanders writes, 'by no hope for the future, only by the continual withholding of intention, by a most faithful yielding of himself.' Here we come to his own conception of the life spiritual. God's servant must first get rid of personal desires and then he must do nothing—and everything. He must wait for love to flood in ; after that he forswears his heritage if he finds any suffering too crushing for a spirit thus baptized. It was because he believed this with such terrible intensity that he was able to live so many lives, all equally harassed and full of suffering, as gladly as if they were lives of pleasure ; and this it was that gave his tender unrelenting austerity such authority over all ranks, from Queen to criminal ; that left him, storm-beaten in mid-ocean, as tranquil as a big ship in port.

This truth, Miss Sanders makes one feel, must be grasped before we can understand St. Vincent's work, and in order that we may avoid what is, she tells us, the prevalent idea of him—that of a busy philanthropist absorbed in practical activities. To him his priesthood, his inward being, was paramount ; his deeds were but its fruit. Another fact emerges clearly from her pages, that when St. Vincent became absorbed in the crying needs of the poor he did not stand alone. There was already in France in the middle of the seventeenth century an outburst of philanthropic and religious genius like that of art two hundred years before, or of poetry in Elizabethan England. Names of men and sects fill the stage. There were Bérulle, the founder of the Oratorians, and Olier, the initiator of the Seminary of St. Sulpice ; there was the Secret Company of the Blessed Sacrament (the *Cabale Dévote*) ; there were St. François de Sales and Mme. de Chantal ; before all there was Port Royal with its St. Cyran and its Mère Angélique, its Arnaulds,

its converted Pascal. But the greatness of these figures—at least of such as were prominently practical—only serves to show off the stature of the man who stood higher than they did. They make his life more, not less, wonderful.

Vincent de Paul was born in 1576 of peasant proprietors. His father sold a yoke of oxen to keep him at college, and he was brought up to the priesthood. Five years after his ordination business took him to Marseilles, and on his return journey he was taken prisoner by Turkish pirates, carried to Tunis, sold as a slave to an alchemist, and later to a renegade Savoyard, who again turned Christian and liberated him. Vincent went back to France in 1609, and was made Almoner to the widowed and debt-ridden Reine Margot. It was after this that his real religious life began. He lodged with Bérulle and the newly founded Oratorians, became curé of Clichy, and a year later was sent, sorely against his will, to be tutor to the children of the aristocratic Gondi family. Yet this hated appointment it was which led him to his vocation. Mme. and M. de Gondi were the first people to fall subject to the power of the shabby little priest, 'so uncouth of aspect, yet possessed of such infinite attraction,' who, when his duties were performed, retired daily to monastic seclusion. Gradually he grew to be their spiritual guide in all things. The state of the poor throughout that century in a France devastated by war and famine, where the peasant was little more regarded than the wild beasts in the forests, defies description; and the sights he saw among the peasants of the countryside kindled in him that passion of charity which henceforth consumed him. With the help of the rich and fervent Gondis he began what was to prove the work—the great work—of his lifetime. In 1625, when he was near fifty, was founded the Congregation of Mission Priests, the evangelising guardians of the poor and oppressed; in Paris to start with, later throughout the provinces, finally

among the slaves of Africa and the negroes of Madagascar, in Poland, in Ireland, in the Hebrides, among the galley-slaves at Marseilles ; wherever they went suffering torments from plague, disease, climate, hunger, cold, and violence, and, inspired by their teacher, shedding their lives like worthless garments. Their training in the House of Saint Lazare in Paris was long and terribly severe, yet most of them looked back to it as the most precious time of their lives. No less stern was the rule of the companion mission which, in 1632, followed that of the priests—the Mission of the Sisters of Charity, daughters of the people, vowed to God, yet not nuns ; like the priests, spreading their network over France, and led by an heroic general. This was Mlle. Le Gras, who was the St. Clare of St. Vincent's existence, and died only just before him. These Sisters were originally started as a supplement to the 'Ladies of Charity,' the *grandes dames* who at St. Vincent's call undertook the supervision of the neglected Hôtel Dieu, and whose work, ardent though it was, suffered from the ignorance of fashion. Yet they continued, and finally assumed the care of the foundlings—needful care, since hitherto the State had left this charge to nurses, who had deliberately done away with four hundred babies in one year. Results make easy reading for posterity, but on all sides St. Vincent was beset by obstacles as great as those that beset St. Paul. His worst enemies were those of his own household—not surprising at a time when in one diocese alone seven thousand priests, drunk or immoral, served at the altar. Gradually, as his gift came to be recognised, he was able to insist on harbouring young priests before their ordination. His seminaries were among the chief agencies of clerical reform.

Of public life he had little. Miss Sanders's excellently lucid account of the Fronde, that dustiest and most foolish of civil wars ; of his ascendancy over obstinate, weak-willed, good-natured Anne of Austria, who made him

member of her Council of Conscience ; of his daring in attempting to make her give up Mazarin ; of his failure and of Mazarin's reign, is not the least attractive part of her study. Admirable also are her chapters discussing his persecution of Port Royal, and those last days of endurance and fulfilment. She is a dignified historian, a fine guide, guiltless of the craven modern fear of being dull ; so free of self and so sure of her subject that she is safe always to be interesting, and she is rich in deep research and sound judgment. Here and there her work would gain by focusing—in the case, for instance, of her pictures of the misery of France, which give the impression of reiteration, because they recur on scattered pages instead of gaining force by union. And the arresting portrait of Cardinal de Retz has not quite enough relation to St. Vincent to justify its prominent place. But she never really loses sight of her central figure, and he alone it is who concerns us. What was it that gave St. Vincent his amazing power over all sorts and conditions, that made a few months with him an abiding force, enabling average men and women to abandon their lives to pain and weariness ? Partly that rare union of an extraordinarily loving understanding with unflinching truth, and with the searching humanity which made him treat criminals as his equals and tend the mad and depraved beneath his roof. There was something more—less explicable. One day Marthe de Vigeon, the great Condé's love, the triumphant belle of Paris, was escorting him downstairs. 'Mademoiselle,' he said, looking in her eyes, 'you were not intended for the world.' She seemed to pay no heed to his words. Within three years, without any outward reason, she entered the Convent of the Carmelites.

We are brought back to the mystery of the saint. It is in vain we reason with our feeling of discomfort and try to prove that a life which thwarts nature must be a mistake, however glorious ; or explain the matter by telling our-

selves that a saint is a moral genius as abnormal as all geniuses. We cannot evade the fact that men like St. Vincent get far beyond other men on the road to heaven, that they need none of our maps to direct them. But we must not confuse issues. They are wrong thinkers, but their conclusions are right because their spirits are right, and the spirit is stronger than the mind. St. Vincent de Paul solved life's problem because he unknowingly transcended his own short-sighted notion of personal salvation and forgot his safety in the good of others; because he performed that miracle of love which unites all saintly persons from the holy man by the Indian roadside to the apostles and heroes of Christianity. Yet we must not forget that the saint's ideal—limiting as it does the mind of God, and silencing all but one of the many voices in which He speaks—however noble for the individual, would destroy the life of the race with the very conditions which make it possible for the good to exist. Only when the saint embraces thought, and the thinker dares to be saintly—not with the sentiment of reaction and the 'all or nothing' faith of the sceptic—will the Kingdom come upon the earth. (1918.)

A HEROINE OF CORNEILLE

LA GRANDE MADemoisELLE. 1627-1652. By ARVÈDE BARINE; translated by Helen E. Meyer. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 12s. 6d.)

To read a good memoir is to wonder why anybody should ever read a novel. A history such as this one of the Great Mademoiselle is more amusing, less jarring, less bewildering than daily existence. The reader is not troubled by the improbabilities created by a second-rate imagination, and the central figures stand out in the fitting framework of

time and circumstance. Madame Arvède Barine has the gift of making the portrait predominate, however alluring the golden frame, and she could have chosen no more masterful a figure than Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans. She was the last of the Renaissance women, those singular mixtures of romance and matter-of-fact. She was the first of the women *à la* Corneille, the women in the Grand Style, so like the buildings of the period with their pseudo-classicism, and their friezes heavily carved with helmets, wreaths, and cupids. Mademoiselle's personality presented strong contrasts. She was grand, she was absurd, she was quixotic, she was prudent; her heroism and her frivolity touched each other closely, and when most of a hero she could suddenly fall and become the most puerile of women. For moments she belonged to Shakespeare, for hours to Molière. She was, indeed, fated to be preposterous. The result was natural in the case of a woman who made imaginary lovers out of an emperor, a king, and a prince, not one of whom ever intended to marry her. Her strength and her weakness lay perhaps in the fact that she was that exceptional creature, an ambitious woman—ambitious for her own sake, not for that of another person—an attribute which led her into strange places.

It is impossible to understand her without, in some measure, understanding her time—a time presenting as many contrasts as the characters of its women. Never was the divine right of kings more unquestioningly recognised than under Louis XIII. and his son. Never had the Court greater power than at this moment, when each peer and princeling had a minor divine right of his own. Nor had there ever stretched a wider gulf between Court and city, King and people. The populace simply did not count. Yet, as Anne of Austria left her palace, the fishwomen were allowed to press round her and ply her with crude comments on her supposed relations with Mazarin. The luxury in

royal trappings was excessive ; nevertheless, when the King invited guests to stay with him he only offered them empty rooms, and they had to bring their own furniture and bedding. Barbarisms were practised in the streets of Paris, but not far off there existed the first of the salons—in the famous Hôtel Rambouillet, which was to do so much in shaping modern existence. Of Madame de Rambouillet, its foundress, of the wits and beauties and pedants who gathered there, of the *Précieuses* whose famous affectations did so much to develop language and to civilise manners, Madame Arvède Barine gives a vivid and delicate picture. Here Corneille read the *Cid* as the work of an unknown author, and was advised by Voiture to put it away in a drawer. Letters from the absent were discussed as if they were masterpieces, and scholars ‘writhed’ in pain when they heard a mistake made in grammar. But the real result of the ‘Blue Salon’ was a solid one. It changed the social code ; it enabled authors to meet noblemen on equal terms, and raised the position of literature. More than this, it established the position of women. For it was the Hôtel Rambouillet that produced the political lady ; that brought forth the band of practical beauties by whom the second Fronde, the ‘Ladies’ Fronde,’ was organised. The sword-like tongues of Madame de Longueville, Madame de Chevreuse, Madame de Montbazon and their like were potent weapons. So determined were these Frondistes that two of them stationed themselves in the doorway of the Hôtel de Ville, till their gallant allies, the councillors inside it, took them in and arranged a luxurious Salon for them there. In the Louvre, also, a woman, or rather the relation between a woman and a man, was deciding the national destiny. First Richelieu had a love passage with the Regent, Anne of Austria ; then Mazarin took possession of her heart and ruled her and France. She had a secret corridor made between their rooms, and he

appeared everywhere with her, remaining with his hat on in her presence. These tyrant cardinals live before us : Richelieu, superb and hard ; Mazarin, the crafty, soft-spoken, stony Italian. By their side move many other figures : that of La Rochefoucauld, gathering the experiences from which he wrote his maxims ; of Retz (afterwards a cardinal), the leader of the people's Fronde, ' the trickster of the pulpit and of the slums ' ; of the romantic Cinq-Mars, who lost his head for the sake of a conspiracy ; of Condé, the great Condé in battle, ' the awkward and insignificant Condé of civil life,' with his ungoverned nerves and his ' invincible immoderation.' Hard by all this gay society, and more or less the result of it, was growing up the movement for religious reform which developed into Jansenism and found refuge in Port Royal. St. Cyran, the stern father of that fraternity, was already in the field ; Bérulle was founding another brotherhood, the Oratorians, who gradually formed a college for the training and sending forth of pious priests ; St. François de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul, most practical of saints, were pursuing their heavenly work.

In surroundings such as these lived and moved the Great Mademoiselle. She was born in 1627. Her mother, a princess of Lorraine, died soon after her birth ; her father was Gaston of Orléans, son of Henry iv. and brother of Louis XIII., a fantastic decadent, who feared his penetrating daughter and by turns scolded and cajoled her. A lonely little girl is, perhaps, the most pathetic thing on earth ; but Mademoiselle could never be pathetic, even at three years old. When she had reached that age she had already developed a full-fledged hatred for Richelieu. At nine (when she was baptized) she rebelled against his sponsorship as too plebeian to suit her. At ten she travelled to Tours that her father might ' present his mistress to her. Mademoiselle declared herself satisfied with her father's

choice.' She had, however, refused to receive her till her governess could assure her that 'Louison' was 'a very good girl.' From earliest infancy Mademoiselle was upheld by her overweening sense of the importance of the 'younger branch'; by her dream that her father or she herself might ascend the throne of France. Her exuberant arrogance only endeared her to the *canaille*. She did not reckon them as human beings, but she made it a point of honour to conduct herself as their goddess, and thought of herself as such. She wrote pages about her own beauty, and early in the day she set about the real task of her life—the finding of a husband suitable to her position. Madame Barine points out how entirely her views about marriage were based upon Corneille's plays. She was his apt pupil, besides being the heroine of his *Pulchérie*. The sacrifice of individual feeling to the public good was the Corneillian ideal, and this was what she practised with heroic bathos. Sentiment she regarded as a sign of bad breeding, and she resolved to love nothing but the highest rank. De Soissons, her first lover, the only one in her youth who was not purely imaginary, wooed her in early life with sweets, but his family was below her demands. After that, nothing but the Emperor would please her, and him she would have married had she hated him. Three times did she try hard for the recalcitrant potentate, who married twice and lost both wives. Her first attempt was the subject of a quarrel between her and the Regent, and, as she refused to submit, her father shut her into her room for ten days; but the mob gathered beneath her windows, and she emerged more powerful than ever. Nothing daunted, she soon set her mind on the little king, and only swerved from him at the moment when the imperial situation was vacant; so that at the same moment she was pursuing a mature widower and a boy of ten years old. Her chances of winning him depended on Mazarin's stratagems, and, when these drove

her to despondency, she turned her attention to the great Condé.

The Fronde gave her her opportunity. It was at first the war of the people, then of the nobles and the people, against Mazarin and Anne of Austria. Twice the Court fled to Saint-Germain and was practically cut off from supplies ; but the mob excepted their idolised Mademoiselle, who went in and out of Paris as she pleased. In the second Fronde, the city of Orléans, threatened by the Cardinal's troops, summoned its Duke Gaston to help it ; Gaston refused. Mademoiselle reproached, implored—in vain. She resolved to go in his stead, and arrived in his apartment in military dress, with a staff of feminine field-mmarshals in helmets. Monsieur allowed her to go and gave her *carte blanche* ; but he took aside the masculine officers, who were also to accompany her with their soldiers, and told them not to let her do anything important ‘without explicit orders from her father.’ Mademoiselle arrived at Orléans ; the Governor unheroically sent out bonbons to refresh her, but she rose to the occasion. By her own strategy she succeeded in entering Orléans, and took prompt possession of the town. She remained as long as she enjoyed herself, and then, contrary to her father's commands, she rode back to Paris, triumphantly met on her way by Condé and his army. But this was not her supreme moment. Turenne was Mazarin's general, and Condé was near succumbing to him just outside the closed gates of Paris. He sent in haste to Mademoiselle to bid her get the gates opened. She ran to her father, who said he was ill and refused to act. Again she upbraided him and again took his place. To the Hôtel de Ville she marched, forced the pusillanimous officials there to have the gates opened, received Condé, rushed to the Bastille and commanded that its cannon should be turned on the enemy, and, returning to a place near the gates, was in time to learn that she had rescued

her Prince from death. She could really be great on occasions, and, with all the impulsiveness of a woman, she had the coolness and resource of a leader. Life was more to blame than herself for her absurdities, since it did not provide her with the opportunities suited to her ever-present forces, and these became grotesque when applied to the small situations of daily existence. Dramatic natures are bound to create a drama round them, and that of the Grande Mademoiselle hovered between comedy and tragedy. Condé knelt to her on that victorious evening, but not for long. Once more she had to give up her matrimonial hopes. Worse than this, there was talk of recalling the banished Mazarin. The Fronde was over, the Frondistes sent into exile. Mademoiselle's royal blood availed her nothing. She, too, was forced to leave Paris, and drove ignominiously away into the provinces in a common hackney-coach. For the first time she was depressed, and it is at this tantalising point that her chronicler chooses to leave her—in a mouldering house, her property, deep in the country. But Madame Arvède Barine consoles us by the promise of another volume, and we thank her for it prospectively. Her sense of proportion, her vigour, and her gaiety make her a charming biographer. Her translator hardly does her justice. To render 'spirituel' by 'spiritual,' to say 'blessed water' for 'holy water,' and 'retired himself' for 'withdrew,' are surely mistakes that can be avoided.

As we close the book we feel very far from Mademoiselle d'Orléans and her times. And yet, on consideration, we also feel near to her. Dress changes, but woman remains unaltered, and the noble Ridiculous are a race that does not die out. To-day Mademoiselle would be leading some private crusade of her own, half laughable, half sublime; she would not wear a helmet, but a bonnet, yet the *panache* in both would be the same, (1903.)

LOUIS XIV

MÉMOIRES SUR LA COUR DE LOUIS XIV. Par PRIMI VISCONTI.
Traduits de l'Italien par JEAN LEMOINE. (Paris : Calmann-
Lévy. 7f. 50c.)

‘In fact, the Court is the best comedy in the world.’ Thus writes the Italian, Primi Visconti (himself an actor in the piece), about the Court of Louis XIV. Its improper proprieties astonished him. ‘The King,’ he says,

lived among his favourites . . . as if in the midst of his lawful family ; the Queen received their visits and those of the natural children as if it were a duty she was bound to fulfil . . . When they came to Mass at Saint-Germain they placed themselves full in the sight of the King—Madame de Montespan and her children on the left-hand daïs, facing the public, and the other one (Mademoiselle de Fontanges) on the right hand ; whereas at Versailles Madame de Montespan was on the Gospel side, and Mademoiselle de Fontanges upon the raised steps on the Epistle side. With their rosaries or missals in their hands they prayed, turning up their eyes in ecstasy, like saints.

The frank immorality of our Charles II. is almost refreshing compared to this. There is, indeed, no time as rotten as that in which vice becomes so normal that it demands its pieties and a rigorous etiquette of its own. France in 1680, writes Visconti, was so austere supervised by the King that its outward semblance was that of a seminary. ‘All the world,’ he says, ‘is afraid of the King. He wants men to lead a regular life.’ But below the frigid surface there was chaos ; ‘every household in a state of revolt ; neither dwelling-place, property, family, nor honours which could be called durable. You rise in the morning without knowing what will have become of you by the evening ; everything is in the hands of Providence.’ Perhaps it is not the least significant sign of the day that the last

sentence is written in good faith, without any satirical intention. Providence at Court was a power less able and more arbitrary than the King.

There were a great many reasons for this dire contrast between seeming and reality, and one of the chief among them was that between the King's precepts and his practice. He was not the first sovereign to combine the morals of mythology with sentimental religious observance, but he was perhaps the first who made immorality so domestic that parents and husbands worked hard to get their daughters and wives accepted in the place of a Montespan or a Fontanges; that all the Court rose when one of his mistresses entered, and this even when the Queen was present—indeed, it was her first intimation that Madame de Ludres was the new favourite. Perhaps, also, he was the first ruler to spend his own life in making love and to condemn others for doing so. Lovers, he said, were 'the slaves of passion,' useless as tools for State business, and he did his best to circumvent their love affairs by his system of secret intelligence. In so far he was consistent that he himself was passionless, while avoiding the stigma of slavery by his method of domesticating his gallantries. To light intrigues, so long as no man took them seriously, he had no objection, thus reducing the morals of his day to the last dregs of cynicism. For such intrigues became so much the fashion at Court that men would do anything to establish their position as '*coueurs d'aventures*.' Visconti describes a gentleman who constantly had letters brought him in public places by messengers dressed in grey. 'I surprised him one day,' he says, 'in the act of reading most intently a letter in the courtyard of Saint-Germain—and then I discovered that the letter was really from his wife.' The King at least never grew silly in his devices to escape respectability. But his qualities were by no means negative. To impose himself as he did upon his subjects, and to

regulate his bad life as stringently as if it were a good one, required no common capacities. He must have possessed that baffling gift that we to-day call magnetism, and he must have had a strong head on his shoulders. Paradoxical though it sounds, he must also have exercised great powers of self-control when he wanted to exercise them ; and if so, this might offer some kind of explanation of Visconti's surprising assurance that, outside his State ambition and his love affairs, his Majesty 'was a saint.' No stranger one, surely, ever upset the calendar.

Visconti's studies of him make by far the most impressive part of the book, the more so that, written for a private eye, they are not the work of a flatterer with self-interest to serve. It may be that we have all been rather too much under the spell of Thackeray's immortal picture of him, without remembering that, masterpiece though it be, it is a masterpiece painted by a humorist ; true, indeed, but only partially so—his face seen, as it were, in profile, from a modern point of view. This is not the King whom men saw then, or who exercised such a magic sway upon them. We have too long regarded him as the amazing *Roi Soleil* who shone chiefly upon the unjust, and we have hardly stopped to wonder at the real effectual warmth that emanated from him. Primi Visconti makes us feel his charm and his force. We realise the dignity of his presence ; his shrewd and cautious cleverness, more solid than brilliant in his judgment of men and of events. After he and his Ministers had sat for hours over some knotty problem of foreign affairs, his Majesty, says Primi, would retire to solitude, and next day appear in council with a lucid solution. Men were his books. He never read, unless it were an occasional account of his campaigns, or some work dedicated to him, of which etiquette demanded a perusal. Literary taste he had none, nor is he the first or the last royal personage without it. When Racine and Boileau were allowed to compete as

writers of a history of his reign, they were summoned to read aloud what they had written to himself and to Madame de Montespan. 'Our historians had better go back to their rhymes,' said the Maréchal d'Estrades. '*Ces messieurs* read some fragments of their histories yesterday, at Madame de Montespan's. The King shook his head, and every now and then muttered, "Journalism, pure journalism," below his breath to Madame de Montespan.' But if he had no artistic gifts (the blunders in the building of Versailles were his own, the victories belonged to those he employed) he possessed a sense of humour rather rare in a king, and a French king. Surrounding sycophants are part of the conventional portrait of him, but he saw through them and laughed at them in his sleeve. One day at dinner he took a rotten pear, ate a morsel, and passed a slice to the Maréchal de Gramont, who was famous for servile adulation. 'What a delicious pear!' exclaimed Louis. 'Pray taste it, Monsieur le Maréchal!' 'Exquisite, the fruit is exquisite!' said Gramont at once. The King burst out laughing, and pronounced the pear to be 'detestable.'

Practical he was, rather as Napoleon was practical, with a leader's scorn for middlemen and for most Ministers, except as useful hacks. No petitioner was put off with an official. Each one, however insignificant, saw him face to face. Nor did he waste time on preliminaries. He never considered any public subject until it had been summed up for him in a clear and concise digest. And no man knew what he thought until he had taken his decision. Abilities such as these have great drawbacks. Like Napoleon, he suppressed able men and encouraged obedient mediocrity. The result was universal degeneracy. The splendour of royal robes and fripperies has been part of our conception of Louis—an erroneous part. Here, also, his attitude was practical; he valued his trappings as a means of impres-

siveness—the stock-in-trade of Divine Right. But he did not care for them in themselves. He took, says Primi, half the time his chaplain took to dress himself; and in war he liked work-a-day clothes. In this he was a great contrast to his brother, ‘Monsieur’ (d’Orléans), who ‘dressed himself for battle as if he were going to a ball, and then, painted and indolent, sauntered up to the most dangerous places, and faced the fire just as if he were setting out to call on Mademoiselle de Grancey.’ And this man, who ‘never wore a hat in the field for fear it should crush his wig,’ was a far better soldier than the hardy King, who ‘dressed himself mainly for convenience and discarded furbelows.’

I wish you could see the King [writes Primi]: he has the air of a great dissembler and the eyes of a fox. . . . He is not handsome, but he has regular features and the eyes express what you like. They are majestic, voluptuous, tender, great, in turn. In short, he has a presence . . . and if he were no more than a courtier, he would stand out among the others . . . I have been with him and other courtiers privily in his apartment, and more than once I have noticed that if the door happened to open, or he himself went forth, he at once composed his attitude and changed his countenance. . . . He never talks State affairs, excepting with the Ministers in Council. . . . But whenever he speaks, even when he speaks most frivolously, it is an Oracle who pronounces. At table, and wherever he is obliged to talk, he does so gravely and clearly.

France is the land of common sense, and Louis was the most French of Frenchmen. Common sense lifted him above the superstitions then so prevalent at his Court. There reigned there an absolute *furor* for prophecy, fortune-telling, every kind of black art that duped credulity. It was entirely to this credulity that Visconti owed his footing at Versailles. For, from the moment he arrived in France, he began to prophesy to any chance stranger with the most astonishing results. It seems as if he must have been

endowed with some uncanny power of second-sight, intensified, as he himself owned, by keen faculties of observation and by a retentive memory. Some said that on his coming into France two gentlemen of quality took him with them and initiated him into every detail of Court scandals. That might explain his knowledge of the writer, directly any letter was given into his hand, but it would hardly account for his strange forecastings of that writer's future. Primi became 'the rage'; coaches thronged his door, grand ladies blocked his staircase; the Queen sent for him, and even the Grande Mademoiselle deigned to make a midnight assignation with him at a friend's house, and to receive him there, veiled, anonymous—and obviously herself. But when, in the midst of all this vogue, the King asked him if his knowledge were really occult, Primi laughed, and frankly admitted that there was no magic in it. His answer gained him the royal favour. Louis remained his friend. He extended his patronage to the histories which Primi took to writing, and when trouble drove him from his own land of Italy the King finally naturalised him as a French subject. And it would have gone ill with Primi in the famous 'Affaire des poisons,' had not Louis protected him. The fashionable craze for magic had ended in frequent deaths by poison, and a drastic inquisition had been organised into the doings of all those who practised wizardry. But the 'Affaire' was really due to the King's one obsession—his horror of being poisoned himself—and he took care that Primi should not suffer. This fear of death paved the way for Madame de Maintenon. That and his Majesty's growing weariness of Madame de Montespan were at least main factors in his so-called repentance. And to these must be added the growth of his natural taste for clever women and for interesting conversation. It is a pity that Primi should stop short of the secret marriage. It was one that even he would not have dared to foretell. (1908.)

DUCHESS SARAH

DUCHESS SARAH: Being the Social History of the Times of Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough. Compiled and arranged by One of her Descendants (Mrs. ARTHUR COLVILLE). (Longmans. 18s. net.)

WHERE biography is concerned the dead are more satisfactory than the living. When we come to the lives of our contemporaries we are either too much stirred or too much disappointed; we over-value or we under-value; we are too near, too much influenced by the stories we have recently heard. Such chronicles may be immensely interesting, but they become like a bit of life, and they cannot provide us with that calm and refreshing haven which we reach when we drop anchor in the deeps of memoirs. Nor does it, therefore, matter so much whether these are well or ill written, whereas we cannot but criticise a picture of our own days as a work of art and literature. Any anecdote of the past that throws a fresh sidelight amuses and instructs us, without our making much demand as to the manner of its presentment.

The present volume is a case in point. It is a book of delightful intentions, fulfilled by an inexperienced but conscientious hand. The facts, the stories, the letters, follow each other, for the most part, according to their date, without much coherence or power of choice, and with no artistic connexion. But the author, Mrs. Arthur Colville, has the blood of the Duchess in her veins, and she says rightly that 'another writer, though abler, might have less sympathy for Sarah's character than one of her own descendants.' As Mrs. Colville writes without the slightest pretension, the result is a living, if confused, portrait of the great Duchess of Marlborough. We can follow her from her birth in 1660, through her youthful days at Charles II.'s

Court—where her sister Frances Jennings played such a part—and on through the reigns of James II. and his followers to her death in the time of George II. Her manners were those of her day. ‘I could not make out, sir, who she was,’ said a lawyer’s clerk to his master, who had been out when she came, ‘but she swore so dreadfully that I am sure she must be a lady of quality.’ And yet, whatever her manners, and in spite of the corrupt school in which she was brought up, her morals remained free from taint—no small thing in her generation. Her talisman was her heart, as she herself unconsciously tells us. ‘I have always thought,’ she wrote, ‘that the greatest happiness of life was to love and value somebody extremely that returned it, and to see them often. . . . But, alas, though one’s natural pleasure is to love people, the generality of the world are something or other so disagreeable that it is impossible to do it.’ This was written in her old age, but it flashes her character upon us. Vehemently loving, vehemently vexed with those she loved, and vehemently frank with all men, Sarah Jennings was one of those women who hated nothing so much as a calm. Storms and scenes, whether of temper or affection, were her element, and though she often imagined she loved solitude in Windsor Forest, it was but as a rest from her tantrums. She recruited her forces in those quiet glades and returned, like a giant, to the fray. In spite of all this, however, she was so generous, so warm, and so nobly devoted that her intimates (including her servants) could not help adoring her; and first among them came her husband. His letters to her were ever those of a lover, and his patience was imperturbable, though, as she loved him most, she plagued him almost past endurance. ‘On one occasion when the Duke was ill Sarah pressed him to take some medicine, saying impetuously, “I’ll be hanged if it do not prove serviceable.”’ Dr. Garth, who was in the room, exclaimed, ‘Do take it, my lord duke, for it must

be of service one way or the other !' The Duchess only laughed, for she enjoyed receiving frankness as much as she enjoyed administering it. It was probably this very tempestuousness of hers which kept her heart so young and lent her that power of exciting others which gave freshness to their feelings for her. When she was a widow and the Duke of Somerset proposed to her she proudly refused him. If he were the Emperor of the world, she said, she would 'not permit him to succeed to that heart which had been devoted to John Duke of Marlborough.' As for the Duke, his love is writ clear in his letters. Whether they were sent from his camp in the Netherlands when he was wearying to be with her at home, or written in England about business matters, such as the building of Blenheim, they all alike breathe the true spirit of romance. So did his thoughts and actions. It must have been one of the acutest moments of Sarah's life when, after his death, she opened the cabinet in his room and there found carefully preserved the long golden curl that she had cut off in a pet to spite him.

Such an impetuous woman was bound to make uncommon friendships. Mrs. Colville does not add any striking fact to what we already know about Sarah's famous friendship with Queen Anne, but she gives that completeness to the picture which makes us see the Duchess in rather a new light. She was more sinned against than sinning, and the faults that spoiled her cause were the faults of a warm heart and an outspoken tongue. Mrs. Masham, her supplanter in the Queen's favour, was her cousin and her debtor in a hundred ways ; indeed, she owed her whole career to Sarah's kind offices ; and the mean backstairs stratagems by which she ousted her, the stories she told the Queen against her, the machinations she indulged in with Harley, fully justified the Duchess's anger. The affair was the sadder because of the trials which the friendship of the two women had,

in old days, successfully sustained. These were the days of William and Mary, when Anne was in disgrace for keeping Sarah as her lady, yet none the less braved the consequences and clung to her; the days when they were still 'Mrs. Morley' and 'Mrs. Freeman,' a name derived from Sarah's freedom of speech. Nor did 'Mrs. Morley' resent this frankness; on the contrary, she begged it as a favour and a sign of equality in friendship. But this loyalty to Sarah caused the breach to widen between her and her sister, Queen Mary. Matters grew crucial, and when the Princess Anne lay seriously ill Mary first refused to take notice of the fact, and then paid her a visit which can hardly have soothed the poor invalid.

The Queen never asked her how she did, nor expressed the least concern for her condition, nor so much as took her by the hand. The salutation was this:—'I have made the first step by coming to you, and I now expect you should make the next by removing my Lady Marlborough.' The Princess answered 'that she had never in all her life disobeyed her, except in that one particular, which she hoped would some time or other appear as unreasonable to her Majesty as it did to her.' Upon which the Queen rose up and went away.

Anne did not break her word, and it was only after she came to the throne and put herself into the Tories' power that a change began to show itself. For a long while the open-natured Duchess, who really loved her friend, refused to believe the truth. But facts forced themselves upon her eyes, the Queen grew ever colder, and their altered relations soon became the talk of the town. It was in vain that Sarah sought for an explanation. Once when Mrs. Masham refused to meet her and clear up her strange conduct, the Duchess complained of this to Anne.

It was the Queen's usual way on any occasion where she was predetermined (and my Lord Marlborough has told me it was her father's) to repeat over and over some principal words she had

resolved to use, and to stick firmly to them. She continued, therefore, to say 'it was very natural, and she (Mrs. Masham) was very much in the right.'

The whole picture of Anne—generous, stupid, and royally obstinate—is conjured before our eyes. Mrs. Colville thinks that Duchess Sarah, who was busy about many things—her husband's career, her children's welfare—had not done her best to fulfil Queen Anne's exacting demands; but, even if this were so, she could hardly have checked the rising sun. The friendship between her and her Sovereign was never re-established; and when Queen Anne died, worn out by Tory dissensions, both Marlborough and his wife were abroad.

Duchess Sarah's life under George I. and George II. was never so deeply involved in politics as it had been in the days of Anne. She busied herself largely with the building of Blenheim and the purchase of other houses; for the laying-out of estates, and the quarrels this implied, were among her favourite occupations. She found time for reading also. Her ungoverned temper has left a kind of vague impression that she was rather an uneducated woman, but this was far from the case; she had a real love of books and a neat gift for quotation. Cowley and Montaigne both pleased her. She says:

I used to run from the Court and shut myself up six weeks in one of my country houses quite alone, which makes me now remember Mr. Cowley, who says, 'Tis very fantastical and contradictory in human nature that people are generally thought to love themselves better than the rest of the world, and yet never can endure to be with themselves.'

Montaigne's essays she and Anne had both read in the early days of their intimacy. And there was a certain favourite passage of Anne's in the *Essay on Friendship*, with which 'Mrs. Freeman' upbraided 'Mrs. Morley' when the coolness

began between them. Sometimes, too, she liked philosophising. She writes :

As for my dear friend Socrates, I believe we have no such men in this country, and yet I am not perfectly satisfied even with him ; for I think being unconcerned at dying was more reasonable at a great age, and being quite weary of the world, which could give him no pleasure no more than it can me . . . but notwithstanding this, I like him better than any other of the philosophers. As for his showing such spirits as he did in the conversation after he had taken poison, I imagine it was an easy death that came by degrees, and he could talk and died much easier than our physicians treat us when they blister us and put frying-pans upon our heads, after it is demonstrated we cannot live.

She liked extemporising about the soul, now in play, now in earnest. ‘ I have read lately that there was an opinion the soul never died, that it went into some other man or beast . . . and though the philosophers prove nothing to my understanding certain, yet I have a great mind to believe that Kings’ and first Ministers’ souls when they die go into chimney-sweepers.’ This was written to Lord Marchmont, the friend of Pope, with whom she often corresponded. ‘ If you talk to Mr. Pope of me,’ she says in another place, ‘ endeavour to keep him my friend, for I do firmly believe in the immortality of the soul as much as he does, though I am not learned enough to have found out what it is.’ Pope’s letters to her are delightful. ‘ What can I say to your Grace ? ’ runs one of them. ‘ You think the same things, read the same books, like the same people that I do. . . . Be so good as to like me a little and be assured I shall love you extremely. I won’t subscribe my name that I may not be thought a very impudent fellow.’ Pope must then have basked in her impetuous wit, which did not grow weaker with her years. Far from that, old age was in some respects her best time. Who would not admire the gallant spirit

which, at seventy-one, took her to the law-courts to bring 'an amicable suit' against her wild young grandson, Lord Sunderland, and prevent his parting with Marlborough's sword to money-lenders—the sword she had given the boy herself? 'That sword,' she exclaimed to the Judge, 'my Lord would have carried to the gates of Paris.'

Her fierceness about politics she never lost. At her evening parties she 'occasionally covered her head with her handkerchief, and was then supposed to be asleep. A few years later, being vexed with John Spencer (another grandson) for allowing himself to be influenced by Mr. Fox, his name being mentioned, Sarah exclaimed when in this state, "Is that the Fox that stole my goose?"' This goose, 'Jack Spencer,' was her favourite grandson, and Lady Di Spencer, her friend and her secretary, was her favourite granddaughter. They were both the children of her beloved child Lady Sunderland, who died when they were small. So did Lady Bridgewater, another daughter dear to Sarah's heart. With the rest of her family she was on strained terms; she either quarrelled with them or did not like them, and the fault was not wholly on her side. Perhaps had her only son, the Marquis of Blandford, lived, her end might have been less melancholy; but her early married life was overshadowed by his death, when still a lad at Cambridge. Her last years were also to be overshadowed by the death of her dear 'Lady Di,' who closed her brief career at twenty-eight. The Duchess herself died in 1744, at eighty-four years old, surrounded only by devoted servants, for 'Jack Spencer' arrived too late to bid her farewell. There were few she would have cared to have with her, for she had outlived most of her contemporaries, and when the end came it came as a release. It is difficult to judge of her beauty, largely due to golden hair and brilliant colouring, from the frontispiece of this volume, taken from Kneller's painting of her. It is of the

conventional order, as are the other pictures, chiefly of Royalties, which illustrate Mrs. Colville's work. But the real portraits—not only of Sarah, but of her lord the Duke, of Anne, and the Georges and their predecessors—are drawn in pen and ink in the pages of this pleasant book. (1904.)

ROUSSEAU

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU. By JULES LEMAITRE. Translated by JEANNE MAIRET (Madame Charles Bigot). (Heinemann. 12s. 6d. net.)

ROUSSEAU AND THE WOMEN HE LOVED. By FRANCIS GRIBBLE. (Eveleigh Nash. 15s. net.)

THE HUMANE PHILOSOPHY OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU. Translated by FREDERIKA MACDONALD. (Dent. 2s. 6d. net.)

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU has been in turns adored and detested; he has never been neglected. Nor has he at any time ceased to count—and this although many of his conceptions are now obsolete, much of his intellectual output useless. What is it that makes his power? M. Jules Lemaître, whose admirable lectures on Rousseau have been translated into rather faulty English by a Frenchwoman, assures us with masterly precision and with his own delicious crispness of mind—perhaps also with almost too much legal skill—that Jean-Jacques' immortality is mainly due to his style, exposing on the way without pity all the twists and the foibles of his philosophy. This might be true if it were a spoken style, the great oratory which appeals to the many. But written style touches the few, a limited number of people who have literary susceptibilities. A larger audience demands something that has relation to themselves; something that touches daily life and conduct; and if Rousseau's influence is enduring, it is somewhere in this moral region that his title-deeds to fame will be found.

Mr. Gribble, however, does not think so. He, on the contrary, seems to believe that Rousseau's claim lies in his madness and his illness, in 'the suspicious insanity of the gouty,' the 'cardiac trouble' which made him quarrelsome, or the 'complaint which may have been only indigestion, but was more probably gastric catarrh.' But then Mr. Gribble is clinical rather than literary, and it is certainly easier to explain insanity than the genius which causes it. After all, Mrs. Macdonald has done more to make us understand that genius than either of the other two. She has given us, although in translation, a well-chosen collection of maxims from his works; she has presented us with Rousseau himself, however shorn of his native eloquence.

We are, nevertheless, no nearer the secret of his strength, and the only fashion in which we can attempt to reach it is to begin with what it is not. It is hardly his political significance, or his actual contribution to thought. Even if, as a rough generalisation, it be true that he made the French Revolution, it was the worst part of it that he made. But, although he was one of many who worked, unknowing, at the loom where it was woven, it was not he who created it. The ideas that evoked it were, as M. Lemaître points out, in the air. Rousseau was but the voice of his age—a voice crying in the Hermitage, not far from Madame d'Épinay, and very far from the wilderness. What was it, then, that gave him his hold on the world? It seems as if it were largely this, that the most personal and self-absorbed of men has in some ways had the most impersonal effect. He has lived on in the realm of ideals, perhaps in more varied forms (many of them opposed in seeming to his own), and among more different kinds of men, than almost any other modern genius. Some of his unconscious offspring, although they may not even have read him, have been his worst foes, have slain their father Parmenides; but no educationist, from Miss Edgeworth to Goethe, hardly an idealist

or moral reformer, from Ruskin to Tolstoi, can call himself free of Rousseau. Above all—and it is his main achievement—he formed the Romantic school. Victor Hugo, George Sand, Michelet also (and here we but quote M. Lemaître), would rejoice to acknowledge their debt to him. England, too, showed traces of him. He brought men back to love Nature for her own sake—to love her lyrically. He evoked a new race of poets. Wordsworth himself in his years of fervour for the Revolution must have drunk in the ideas of Rousseau and found that the Frenchman's passion for the country drew out a deeper chord from his own soul. Everywhere Jean-Jacques intensified human insight. He invented, says M. Lemaître, individualism in literature, that note of intimacy and, often, of morbid introspection, which makes the greatness and the smallness of modern art. He was the initiator of something fresh—something of a strangely alloyed nature, both good and evil, but something which, whether good or evil, is ours now and indispensable.

And the mixture is not wholly unexplained. Rousseau's position in time was, perhaps, unique. He is generally regarded as the prophet of a vital future, but he had in him as well all the dead roots of the past. No one was more rotten, or more fertile. Decadent, yet vigorous with the sap of youth, he lived in a frontier country, a land, therefore, of vexed issues; and none can tell clearly even now what was decay, what was promise, in him. The man who could blaze out in noble wrath at cruelty and preach the gospel of loving-kindness at the same time that he was leaving his five babies, one by one, at the door of the Foundlings' Hospital; who could thunder against rank and its luxuries, yet live in clover at the expense of great lords; who urged democracy and supported aristocracy; who wept over the charms of purity and proved them only by being an exception to its rule, was bound to bewilder himself

and us. He is, perhaps, most bewildering in his *Émile*. There is nothing so unnatural as a return to Nature, and Jean-Jacques was the least natural of men. A return always implies a divorce, and a divorce for some highly-strung reason—sensitiveness, satiety, discontent, aspiration, noble or other; all, more or less, the fruits of an over-developed society. Every primitive Utopian, whether purely personal, like Shelley and Blake and Thoreau, or a dreamer for the world, or the maker of an eighteenth-century Arcadia, has founded his desire for solitude on some such disgust with reality, forgetting the while that Nature is the greatest reality of all. Rabelais, alone, who turned to Nature from no quarrel with mankind, but because he wanted to fight asceticism—Rabelais alone saw whither natural instinct must lead men. He, only, had the courage to write '*Fais ce que voudras*' over his Abbey of Thelema. Rousseau, afraid of facing fact, preferred to write 'Sensibility' over his portal, and plunged himself up to the head in a quagmire of untruth.

It was this determination of his to square instinct with conscience which so misled him. 'Conscience speaks for Nature,' he writes, ignoring the obvious drawback that, except in the case of certain instinctive affections, conscience and Nature are at fisticuffs. Again, 'the passions natural to man are the instruments of his liberty' is hardly a statement borne out by history. And what of this: 'There exists no evil but that which thou doest, or else sufferest, and both these evils come from thee. Universal evil lies only in disorder, and I see in the system of the world an order which never belies itself'? Man left to himself, he constantly avers, is wholly good and kind, and so is Nature, in whose image he is made. His attitude is the reverse of that of Wordsworth. While Wordsworth constantly tries to put morality into Nature, Rousseau endeavours to prove that morality is natural. Like other preachers,

he saw only what he wanted to see. 'Oh Nature!' asks M. Lemaître, 'what then art thou? We should so like to know. But if thou art all things, as seems likely, we shall never be any the wiser.' Rousseau, however, to do him justice, has left us a professional definition—and a very queer one it is. Nature, he tells us, is the instinct of self-preservation, first only applied to our own welfare and then extended to that of others. It is a definition which, paradox though it be, covers a good deal of ground. It provides, if not an explanation, a way of stating the dual nature of human beings—very like Blake's theory of man's conflict between Nature, the carnal and selfish, and intellect, the self-renouncing and redeeming; or, indeed, slightly twisted, not far from Christian Science and its formula of mind, and 'mortal mind.'

M. Lemaître, however, would only add this to the endless inconsistencies which Jean-Jacques harboured under his ambiguous terminology, and which his critic proceeds to show up remorselessly. They are glaring, sometimes brazen, and they branch out in every direction; his politics, his faith, his ethical system, his daily life are full of them. Jesuit and Protestant; democrat and aristocrat; a votary of the arts and their denouncer; the defender of property in the *Encyclopædia* and, at the same moment, its virulent foe in public speech; a strict moralist, a lax liver—the legal evidence against him is irrefutable. But evidence, after all, is not the same as truth; it is law, not always moral justice. And M. Lemaître is not quite fair to the Rousseau at the bar. Inconsistency is not insincerity; it is a weakness common to all impressionable men, and doubly prominent in Jean-Jacques, who was born abnormally impressionable. His exhortations to virtue were no hypocrisy. He wished men to lead a good life; he would have liked to lead one himself, but he did not want the strain of trying. No one knew his weakness better than he did. 'Floating

between Nature and reason, I live in a perpetual contradiction and do nothing that I wish to do,' he wrote to the great doctor, Tronchin. And again, in his *Rêveries d'un Promeneur*: 'This comes from a versatile temperament which a turbulent wind always agitates, but which regains calm the instant that the wind ceases to blow. It is my ardent nature which perturbs me, and my indolent nature which pacifies me.' Such a character could never pursue one idea steadily. It would always be easy to prove that he had no convictions. Besides, in spite of his deeper qualities, he was essentially a writer. He could write on any subject, take any side. Pen in hand, his opinions came to him as he wrote, and he believed that he had always held them. When he was discussing with Diderot the essay that made his fame, about the influence of the arts upon the world's progress, he announced himself as their champion. But when Diderot urged him to take the opposite view, as more interesting, he consented, and wrote a burning indictment of art and science as the corrupters of humanity. M. Lemaître would have us think that his whole career was thus based upon an insincerity; but, sooner or later, Rousseau was bound to turn into a foe of civilisation, and his false arguments probably first set him imagining the evils it had brought upon men, and helped him to formulate his message. The essay was a pure piece of journalism, and of journalism Rousseau was the genius. It was this brilliant faculty which enabled him to furnish eloquent tags, such as became the trumpet-calls of the Terror—such as made Robespierre and Saint-Just and Madame Roland quote him, and Marat read him aloud to an acclaiming audience.

But there is one consistency which even M. Lemaître would allow to Rousseau—his amazing, his colossal egoism.¹

¹ [The reader of these papers may be warned that the writer seems to have used this word to cover the meanings both of 'egoism' and of 'egotism.']

If egoism is only vast enough, it can work wonders as great, though not as moral, as does self-sacrifice. And through egoism it was that Rousseau produced much of his effect. In him it turned to unlimited sentimentalism, the most heartless of all 'isms.' It is easy enough to be the Friend of Humanity, which one does not see, but harder to live at peace with one individual; and this inhumanly quarrelsome professor of human feelings had no love in him—did not know what, let alone devotion, the commonest forbearance meant. He belonged, like his literary descendant, George Sand, to the perilous and self-righteous race of aspirers; persons so wrapped up in the nobility of their aims that they forget about their deeds, and think that they cannot do wrong. 'I am intimately persuaded that of all the men whom I have known in my life none was ever better than I,' he wrote. And again, in the *Rêveries d'un Promeneur*, 'My vanity was set at ease when I grew kind to myself, and thus, turning into self-love, it once more became part of the order of Nature. . . . The love of oneself is always good and in harmony with order. We must, indeed, love ourselves better than anything else.' And his measureless vanity told; the world took him at his own valuation. For fifteen mortal hours, with a short, begrudged interval of rest, did an audience of adoring men and women listen to his reading aloud of the *Confessions*. They wept over him; he wept over himself—often; upon his waistcoat (as he tells us), anywhere so long as he shed tears. And if Mrs. Cockburn, of Edinburgh, is typical of his ordinary hostess, who can wonder that he expected a good deal? 'Lord bless you,' she writes, 'bring Rousseau here. . . . Sweet old man, he shall sit beneath an oak, and hear the Druids' songs. . . . I will have him! I cannot speak to him, but I know his heart.' As for parents, they flocked to ask his counsel about the training of their children, and he died at the house of a Marquis who sent

his unhappy progeny every morning up a mast to fetch their breakfast, a hardening discipline to which even the dreadful little Émile was not subjected. Rousseau figured, indeed, as a high priest of education, and led the double life of a priest, the life of the pulpit and his private life.

Perhaps it was the priest in him that increased his power with women. He possessed all the qualities that fascinate them. He was expressive, he needed a confidante, he suffered, they saved him from the stake. He had lofty views and no sense of honour. In vain we seek a word to define him. The dictionary, unfortunately, provides us with no such name ; and, against our will, we find ourselves constrained to take refuge in the objectionable term ‘cad.’ A cad he was—a cad of genius, of the same dazzling family as Byron and Chateaubriand, who, like him, were always adored by women. It is regrettable that it is this side of him which Mr. Gribble chooses chiefly to handle ; but his slightly servants’-hall standards of love do not suit the psychology of great ladies, and he does not understand the Duchesse de Luxembourg, or even the less refined Madame d’Épinay. His best portrait is that of Thérèse ; but here, too, taste is not his strong point. We have heard of open sin, but Mr. Gribble prefers a more homely idiom. He calls it ‘quiet concubinage.’ Wordsworth could never have imagined so improper a theme, but had he done so, ‘John James and Theresa, or Quiet Concubinage,’ would have been no unlikely title for one of his Poems of the Domestic Affections. And what light in the end does Mr. Gribble throw upon anything significant in Rousseau ? He proves, indeed, that Madame de Warens was not separated from her husband on account of a love affair, but because she was a swindler, and ran away with all his plate ; on hearing which, says M. de Warens, ‘I swallowed a basin of soup,’ a bracing and sensible course, but not one which affected Jean-Jacques. And then Mr. Gribble demonstrates that,

owing to an error in dates, Jean-Jacques' joint occupation of Les Charmettes with Madame de Warens, supposed to be such an idyll, only took place after the appearance of the rival lover, not before, so that all romance is now destroyed. But this fact has no importance, except in the region of gossip, and had little effect upon the mind or life of Rousseau. Mr. Gribble is so clever in his statements, and has such shrewd flashes of perception, that it is a pity he cannot oftener be more weighty about his subject.

For it is to Rousseau that we come back. In his own time he could but produce chaos, such a classic of confusion as *La nouvelle Héloïse*, that novel 'serious and false,' as M. Lemaître calls it; such topsy-turvy reforms as induced grand ladies to have their babies brought to the opera that they might nurse them in their boxes. But what is his final worth? It is emotional, not intellectual—a contribution to art, not to thought. He initiated something greater than the Romantic Movement. He introduced into art the idea that motive is more than deed. The Quietists had already translated it into practice and had done a good deal of harm by it. In the hands of Rousseau, the artist, it was equally dangerous. 'I was a slave in my vices,' he said, 'in my remorse I am free.' But though the conception brings its perils, it is also one of the grandest, and it has done big things in literature; nor could we of to-day do without it. And, *pace* M. Lemaître, there is something to be added. Beneath self-deceptions and discrepancies, Rousseau has a final consistency. He has only mistaken the name of the end that he made for. It was not Nature he sought, but moral simplification, the object of all social reformers, ancient and modern, from the days of primitive Christianity to those of Socialism, of Ruskin, Morris, Tolstoi. In all his writings this one aim, this one taste, stands out visibly interwoven with contradictions and tangled webs of words. It lends force and cohesion to what would otherwise be

inchoate emotion. Rousseau's falsity could not destroy his own truth. 'The holy truth which his heart adores,' he says of the Vicaire Savoyard, 'does not consist of indifferent facts and futile names, but in giving unto each man faithfully that which is his due of the things which are veritably his.' This is the real Rousseau. An old farmer who saw him in Derbyshire, and tried in later years to describe him, was not far wrong in his summary. 'It was thought,' he said, 'he was some King who had been driven from his dominions.' And so he was—driven, perchance, by madness. But death came to redeem him, and his dominions are regained. (1908.)

THE UNSELFISH EGOIST

THE INTIMATE LETTERS OF HESTER PIOZZI AND PENELOPE PENNINGTON, 1788-1822. Edited by OSWALD G. KNAPP. (Lane. 16s. net.)

It is sometimes difficult to remember that Mrs. Piozzi was once Mrs. Thrale; that the object of Johnson's devotion is the same woman as the idol of Piozzi. The person adored partakes, indeed, of the nature of the adorer. Samuel Johnson was first-rate and Gabriel Piozzi was not. Besides, Johnson's love was no sinecure; and when from the strenuous industry of serving him body and mind—a mind held forcibly to his level—Hester Thrale passed into the slippered ease of reigning as Queen over inferiors, the relaxation was too great for her calibre. It is generally only the finest natures that are at their best when they are comfortable, and Mrs. Thrale sober is better than Mrs. Thrale drunk—as she was under the spell of her infatuation for the Italian singer, the 'Papist,' the 'foreigner,' whom she married in the teeth of a hostility which was almost persecution.

Mrs. Piozzi it is, not Mrs. Thrale, who is set before us in this newly published correspondence with Penelope Pennington (born Penelope Weston), ably furnished by Mr. Knapp with introduction, notes, and portraits of distinction. The correspondence began in 1788, not long after the ladies made acquaintance and about four years later than the marriage with Piozzi; except for one long break, it continued with increasing intimacy until Mrs. Piozzi's death in 1821.

I

It is not, therefore, the Mrs. Thrale of Boswell, or of Johnson's letters, or of her own sparkling letters to him, or Mrs. Thrale as she saw herself in her Autobiography, that we are now regarding, but a later edition; a celebrity no longer making her intellectual livelihood, but living upon a bequest; a confident success; the lady of Mr. Mangin's *Piozziana*; the heroine of Bath and its *literati*. Bath was the deceptive stage of all big things in miniature, where the audience most easily confounded measurements and held little concerns—themselves included—for big ones, and minnows for Tritons; the seat of learned frivolity and frivolous learning, where it was easy for people to take themselves seriously and to take that for seriousness. And with Bath, though she did not live there altogether until after Piozzi's death, his wife's fortunes were bound up. Her prestige there was of no common sort, for, unlike that of so many of its stars, it was not a local glory. She was a fixed planet in the heaven of literature—acclaimed for her 'elegant genius,' her wit and learning, by the choice spirits of her day. 'Her conversation,' says Miss Seward, 'is indeed that bright wine of the intellect which has no lees.' And nine hours of that wine did 'the Swan' enjoy in one day when the Piozzis visited Lichfield. The Pope of literary ladies, Hannah More, with her talent for success in this world and

the next, was Mrs. Piozzi's admirer; so was Mrs. Carter, that solid store-cupboard full of scholarship and piety. Mrs. Siddons gave her something like worship; Mrs. Montagu, Miss Burney, Mrs. Garrick, the second marriage once an established fact, hastened to acclaim her. In the case of men, the motives of adulation were more complicated; but every accessible author brought her incense—and his manuscripts. 'We want,' she wrote, 'no flash, no flattery. I never had more of either in my life, nor ever lived half so happily.' And there was solid foundation for her popularity. She answered the often tiring demands of friends and scribblers; she was as fond of women as of men; she was loyal and generous to them; she was kind, she was disinterested.

Added to these moral qualities, she had an independent mind, a real impersonal love and a remarkable knowledge of literature, as her frequent apt quotations from Shakespeare would suffice to attest. Her wit, acutest in her letters to Johnson, remained alive in the notes to her autobiography, and in many of her pages to Mrs. Pennington, though that copious correspondent, a clever goose who pulled her fluent quills from her own breast, never drew out the best from Mrs. Piozzi. And her life showed no eye-opening discrepancy between precept and practice. Hester Salusbury began her career as a spoilt child in the house of her uncle, Sir Robert Cotton, and developed into a youthful prodigy, trained in Latin and logic by her captive tutor, Dr. Collier. Her mother persuaded her to accept the wealthy brewer Mr. Thrale, whom she did not love and who did not love her; he married her, she said, because she was the only woman of his choice who consented to live at Southwark. He gave her literary society and Dr. Johnson, but he gave her nothing of himself. He allowed her no power, not even that of ordering dinner; he never spoke to her of his affairs, or drew closer to her through the care of their twelve children, eight of whom, including both their

sons, died early. Yet when ruin threatened him she raised the needful money to save the business ; she was an excellent mother, an excellent wife. To Johnson she sacrificed her time, her health, her habits. When the world libelled her for her marriage with Piozzi, and her disagreeable daughters made false accusations and turned their backs upon her, she bore them no ill-will, and was reconciled directly they desired it. And when ' Miss Thrale,' as she always called the eldest—the ' Queenie ' of Johnson's affection—tried to go to law to rob her of her inheritance, her only vengeance was to present her with large sums of money. To Piozzi she was a perfect companion, to his gout a faithful nurse, and to the tenants on her Welsh estate the kindest of patronesses. After his death she lavished a fortune on his ungrateful nephew, was constant in beneficence and courageous in difficulties. She died with dignity, surrounded at the last by her money-seeking children. And her energy was amazing :

Farewell, dear Friend [she wrote from Wales when nearly sixty] . . . 'tis five in the morning, I was up at four, shall call the men and maids at six, send away this scrawl at seven, jump into the bath at eight, breakfast at nine, work at the book till one, walk till three, have dined by four, fret over Gillon's dispatches and Piozzi's misery all the rest of the day ; a pretty biographical sketch of your literally poor H. L. P.

Could there be a greater contrast to the letter Mrs. Carlyle would have written in like domestic circumstances ? And yet Jane Welsh's grumbles leave us inside—her sprightly predecessor's letters outside—herself. Why does Mrs. Piozzi's presence fail to inspire us with the sympathy that her qualities seem to warrant ?

II

Does the answer lie in the difference of century ? The readers of Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett must feel leagues

away from the fashionable volume of 1786 so much vaunted by Mrs. Piozzi to Mrs. Pennington, Dr. Moore's *Zeluco*, the aim of which was 'to trace the windings of vice, and delineate the disgusting features of villany.' A day when tea—to quote Mrs. Pennington—was called 'a fragrant libation,' when 'professed infidels' figured as the solid boggy of respectability, when Miss Seward's suitor was mentioned as 'the gentle Wickens,' and Mrs. Piozzi dwelt on 'the elegant Eclipse of the Moon,' and seldom spoke of the sea but as 'Old Neptune,' is not our day,—though perhaps gentility and crudity, the love of dressing up and the cult of no clothes, are nearer of kin than it might seem. Nor is the hyperbole of the past much more exaggerative than the bareness of the present. 'Glorious creature! How she writes!' Mrs. Piozzi exclaims about Hannah More; and 'Hannah More, Europe,' she says elsewhere, is sufficient address.

It appears [she also writes to Mrs. Pennington] so strange and so shocking to put up my letter without speaking of Miss Seward that I can't bear it. . . . Her Mental and indeed her Personal Charms, when I last saw them, united the three grand Characteristics of Female Excellence to a very great Perfection: I mean Majesty, Vivacity, and Sweetness.

But mutual admiration societies are not confined to the eighteenth century. There is, said Dr. Johnson, 'a little silkworm world round every individual'; and that silkworm world, if rather relaxing, provided these ladies with the kind of excitement that gave life a motive-power and kept them sweet. Their very follies served them. The octogenarian Mrs. Piozzi fell maternally in love with a young and third-rate actor, whom she took for a genius and who made her the confidante of his love-affairs. The imitative Mrs. Pennington followed suit, and at seventy gave him a kiss 'as chaste as Dian ever gave,' which she

duly reports to her senior rival. The young man sensibly escaped them, but he no more quarrelled with them than we do. Their sentiment was an innocent extravagance put on, as it were, from the outside, and innocuous to anything deeper than their dignity. Yet two or three of Mrs. Piozzi's letters concerning him bring us close to the real cause of our coldness towards her. A phrase here and there reveals that there was about her the Puss Victrix, who frisked after reels of cotton long after the age of reels was past, and even in the midst of those benevolent activities which gave her more suitable occupation.

The fact is that Mrs. Piozzi was that baffling being, an unselfish egoist, always doing for others, always thinking of herself. And with emotion. She was in love with herself, and, like other lovers, saw the beloved as she desired her to be. Human beings she viewed exclusively in their relation to her; she needed adoration, she was subject to her adorers, whether to Dr. Johnson or to Piozzi; but, given the incense, she did not know the difference between them, and when they did not offer it, she had no further use for them—a fact which may account for her cold though generous attitude towards her children after they outgrew her sway and became, we cannot but surmise, irritated at her success out of due season. This it was, also, which no doubt made her unconsciously prefer a wide social career, touching many people at surface points, to a more searching intimacy. 'She always seemed to me kind and warm-hearted, but with no deep sensibilities,' wrote Helen Williams, the Diarist of the French Revolution.

Her delight in herself was certainly apt to make her rather dense about humbler people—her dependants, or those whom she conveniently dismissed as 'Rustics,' whose admiration did not interest her. When she and Piozzi restored the church on her Welsh estate and opened 'our tiny temple,' she wrote a rather tactless hymn for

the occasion, which 'dear Piozzi set enchantingly to music':

To unambitious efforts kind,
Pleased he permits our rustic lays;
Our simple voices, unrefined,
Have leave to sing their Saviour's praise.

So it runs; and the predestination of their voices must have been rather depressing to the choir.

III

In one of her letters Mrs. Pennington ventures so far as to compare herself—with strict reservations—to Ninon de l'Enclos; but neither she nor Mrs. Piozzi could have been anything but English, far removed from their sisters of France. It is just because they were so disinterested in conversation that Frenchwomen achieved their social supremacy. When Madame de Sévigné talked of herself, as she did freely, it was because she had something she enjoyed telling, and she spoke externally, as she would of another person. And if we come to Mrs. Piozzi's contemporaries, Madame du Deffand was athirst for love rather than for admiration; her vanity took the form of self-disgust, a form which only sharpened her self-criticism; while the vanity which inspired women like Madame d'Épinay turned into the fashionable *sensibilité*, a quality absurd enough, but not one which ate deep into the soul like self-satisfaction. As for Madame de Staël, she was frankly selfish and despotic, with the 'noble air,' and yet immersed in subjects for their own sake. There were other differences. Mrs. Piozzi had infatuations rather than passions; she was not, like so many of these Frenchwomen, cleansed by fire. Nor was she redeemed by failure. All her powers were available; there was nothing she could not get at; no reserve, no shadow of mystery to temper the daylight. Her waters ran wide,

not deep, and they were so lucid that every pebble was visible. This kind of fluency robs her amusing utterances on politics—and these letters are full of them—of any arresting force; they make a pleasant trickle, but no more. ‘Piety and business,’ she writes, concerning grief, ‘will effect in a month what the other two (talents and literature) could not perform in a year.’ The sentence only shows that its author could not have been as literary as she seems. No Frenchwoman would have been so little of an artist as to write it. True Briton that she was, Mrs. Piozzi judged literature by its usefulness—by the moral dividends that it brought her. The moralising busy bee is, for good or ill, confined to this island, unless we except Madame de Genlis, whose precepts were so much over-seasoned by her practice.

But it was no doubt the buzz and the carefully manufactured honey that gained Mrs. Piozzi such prestige in her generation. Neither as Mrs. Thrale nor later had she the foibles easily found out—at least by men. Her vices blossomed. Boswell lost his chance and proved his stupidity. He never blamed her rightly; only for such unimportant things as Johnson condemned—her inaccuracies, her exaggerations, and the like. Boswell’s eyes were too much coloured by jealousy to see the truth. Yet it could not have been merely for her sprightliness and kind attentions that Johnson loved her. His heart was too deep to live closely for twenty years on such thin nourishment. His need of love and of family life told for much. And he depended on her tact, which smoothed his spirit. If she had been there, he once told her, Richardson would not have died: ‘that fellow died merely for want of change among his flatterers.’ Her flattery was that of discernment, which drew out what it flattered. And then, whatever her sentiments, she was evidently natural in her manners, even to impulsiveness; and Johnson prized naturalness—

it put him at his ease. The truth seems to be that while he was with her he made her better than she was.

Never [she says of Dr. Collier, her tutor] have I failed remembering him with a preference as completely distinct from the venerating solicitude which hung heavily over my whole soul whilst connected with Dr. Johnson, as it was from the strong connubial duty that tied my every thought to Mr. Thrall's interest, or from the fervid and attractive passion which made twenty years passed in Piozzi's enchanting society seem like a happy dream of twenty hours.

It was the venerating solicitude which did her good, because it was 'venerating.' It produced her best, and the 'twenty hours' of enchantment probably produced her worst. (1913.)

HANNAH MORE

HANNAH MORE. A Biographical Study. By ANNETTE M. B. MEAKIN. (Smith, Elder. 14s. net.)

WHEN Hannah More was a little child, her favourite game was to sit on a chair and pretend that she was riding in her carriage to London to 'see Bishops and booksellers.' She could not have invented a better epitome of her life. Bishops adored her—she incited them to verse. Bishop Lowth addressed lines *Hanae Morae—Virgini piaae, eleganti ingenio, facundia et sapientia pariter illustri* . . . 'Blow, blow, my summer rose, for Hannah More will soon be here,' so another sanguine divine urged on his rose-bush; while to Bishop Porteus of London she was a kind of Evangelical Egeria, haunting the groves of Fulham Palace. It was the same with her adversaries. The Vicar-General of the Pope wrote at length to her, deploring her injustice towards the Church of Rome. She replied at greater length, and, lo! he was a captive at her chariot wheels. 'Beyond every-

thing' was the mildest phrase that any of them applied to the least of her tracts or poems. And certainly her books sold wonderfully. That brings us from the Bishops to the booksellers. They adored her too—for financial reasons. Her success in England and America was bewildering; the Rajah of Tanjore said her tracts were the finest works he had ever read; the Cingalese natives acted her *Sacred Dramas* in Cingalese; *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* was found in Iceland—and even there it must have made cold reading; while, as for the works of her mundane days, they were almost treated like those of Shakespeare. When her play of *Percy* was produced, Fox was in tears; Lord Lyttelton came to see it every night; a certain great lady of fashion would accept no invitations excepting on condition that she might break them to attend performances of it; Garrick also wept when he read it aloud, and so did Hannah More when she heard him; later Mrs. Siddons played in it; and, to crown all, 'the blood of the Percys,' as she tells us, called in the name of the family to thank her. The heroine was called Elwina, and she went mad: not only in the English tongue was it known; the drama was acted at Vienna, it was translated into French, it brought her the honour of becoming a member of the Académie Française.

No less effective were her long romantic poems, 'Sir Eldred of the Bower' and 'The Bleeding Rock.' They caused many hearts to beat faster. Dr. Johnson was fond of reading aloud 'Sir Eldred'—after tea; so was Garrick, who was strongly affected by it. 'The Bleeding Rock' was compared to Parnassus by Mrs. Montagu, and exclaimed over by Wits and Bluestockings. The same worldly success followed her when she renounced the world. From the days when Wesley revered her and Wilberforce chose her as his helpmate, to those when she spurred on Macaulay and presented Mr. Gladstone, aged six, with a copy of her

Sacred Dramas, she sat in the first place and no man could have bidden her go up higher. Windsor was always enraptured by her, and, indeed, there was reason for enthusiasm. She did magnificent work, and she did it in spite of bad health. Together with Raikes she invented Sunday schools; she also (says Miss Meakin) invented tracts as a form of literature; she reformed Cheddar, which when she came to it was little more than a den of vice and poverty unspeakable. This was no easy task to achieve from Bristol, especially when it involved tramps of ten miles round Cheddar, from hostile squire to hostile farmer, to conquer their pig-headed conviction that 'religion was bad for the poor.' Not only here did she succeed, but also in her own neighbourhood, where a district notorious for the many criminals it provided at the Assizes failed, after a few years of her teaching, to produce one prisoner at the bar.

And yet, in spite of all, we never love her, we seldom like her. Lifelong success, it is true, is not an endearing fact; but this in itself is not enough to account for our feeling. It is distressing to have such admiration for the life and such distaste for the liver. Yet we do not set out with this sentiment. Few could help enjoying Hannah in her brilliant youth—the witty Hannah who lived with the Garricks, and rallied Horace Walpole, and delighted in reading Madame de Sévigné, and herself wrote such shrewd and sparkling letters and talked with so much pith and force. There must have been something magnetic about the woman who was Garrick's close friend, his 'dearest Nine,' and was no less the favourite companion of his wife; to whom Walpole showed his finer side; who was—chief of all her honours—beloved of Samuel Johnson. For despite his reproof of her flattery, of which too much has been made, Johnson loved her and sought her companionship. He approved of her. Her taste for piety had been known to bring the tears to his eyes (it was when he found her reading Pascal, and

the tears, it must be owned, followed upon a scolding for studying a Roman Catholic author); the shrewd sense that she showed and the absence of all 'whining over metaphysical distresses' were to his liking. Perhaps he did not admire her Muse quite as much as she thought, and when he 'lamented that I had not married Chatterton, that posterity might have seen a propagation of poets,' or said to one who uttered the word poetry in her presence, 'Hush, hush; it is dangerous to say a word of poetry before her; it is talking of the art of war before Hannibal,' he knew that she was impervious to irony. But these things were after 'Sir Eldred.' Perhaps he had read it once too often.

The speedy lapse of her literary reputation is most comprehensible. Such a fame could only have existed in an age when people talked of geniuses and took eloquent commonplaces for Jove's thunderbolts. 'How unequally are talents distributed in this world,' wrote one of her correspondents, 'that you should be able to write such verses, knit such stockings, and make such aprons!' Not only the verses but all the nineteen volumes of her works are dead and buried—deeper than those possessed by Mr. Birrell, who tells us that he dug a grave for them on the East Coast—a funereal act for which, by the bye, Miss Meakin bitterly reproaches him. She would have liked the nineteen for the London Library, which does not own, it appears, a complete set. The fact is that Miss More's success was not really literary—it was social. It was her vigorous, effectual, gifted nature, her easy efficiency in all she undertook, her direct and epigrammatic tongue, her Reason and Affability—all the brilliant outfit of a power-loving nature bent upon pleasing—that gained her such a name among men of books. Her qualities were just those to make good letters—and she wrote them. By these letters, whether describing the world in which she lived, or Madame de Sévigné

and the art of letter-writing, or Garrick's funeral, or Johnson's last years with their 'mild radiancy of the setting sun,' she should and will be remembered. She was also a keen and omnivorous reader; but she could not read for the sake of reading—it had to be for a moral purpose, and she condemned the author if she did not get what she wanted from him. Gibbon's *History* was to her 'a fine but insidious narrative of a dull period'; she attempted to make Boswell pare down Johnson into an example of Christian amenity, which drew forth from Boswell a retort as rude as any from his master. Her talent for morals kept her busy and applauded in all departments of life.

It is the applause which brings us back to our problem. Hannah More never could give up success, and that is one of the reasons why we cannot whole-heartedly admire her. What was called her conversion was a passing from one sphere of success to another. There are two kinds of conversion, that which comes from conviction of sin and that which comes from a love of influence. Hannah More's conversion belonged to the second sort. She did not really enjoy herself unless she was reforming somebody, nor did she ever enjoy herself as thoroughly as when she had a fashionable rake in hand. This thirst to regenerate was the secret of her excitement over Horace Walpole; it was really a form of flirtation in Sunday dress, and safe to pursue alike with rich and poor, with those in the cloth and those out of it. Her renunciation of her dramatic success at its height was certainly a fine action; but it must at the same time be remembered that she was forty or more when she made it, that she knew her success must wane, that she transferred her gifts to a region better suited to middle age, that she made her sacrifices full in the marketplace, and continued to live in comfort. She could not always afford to be sincere with herself. Every party, for instance, to which she went in middle life was denounced

by her for its banality, its rouge, its lack of real conversation ; each one was to be her last. But as long as opportunity offered she never gave up attending them, becomingly attired, with fresh denunciations upon her lips. She was, to say truth, generally dull when she found no sin to observe ; and it is difficult to think of her as happy in heaven with her occupation gone. No one can contradict Mr. Birrell when he says she was self-satisfied ; she was only technically humble, and perhaps no one has forgiven her enemies with louder noise of artillery. What salvos of pardon were let off over the head of that spoilt child of the Bluestockings, 'the Poetic Milkwoman,' who, drawn from her right sphere by Hannah, became demoralised and turned upon her benefactress ! But the benefactress merely retorted with a renewal of good deeds, taking care to mention them in her letters to Walpole. In all this Pharisaism we cannot help suspecting that Hannah More had only benevolence where she should have had a heart. She was the feminine of Godwin—a Low Church Godwin. Could she otherwise have invented the cold-blooded search of Coelebs for a wife ? And had she really felt, could she have written as she did when Horace Walpole died ? 'Twenty years' unclouded kindness and pleasant correspondence,' she says, 'cannot be given up without emotion. I am not sorry now that I never flinched from any of his ridicule or attacks, or suffered them to pass without rebuke.'

Hannah More's piety was eighteenth-century rationalistic piety. Dr. Warburton could not have said of it, as he did of Böhmen's works, that they 'would disgrace Bedlam at full moon.' Mysticism was double Dutch to Hannah. Her present biographer, however, would not agree with this. She makes her one of a trio together with St. Augustine and Tolstoi. Yet we cannot picture either of these two great men as quite at his ease at Cowslip Green. Miss Meakin is a hero-worshipper. It is perhaps the best

compliment to her that she makes us think so much of her subject as to forget her own part in it. She has read and chosen so well, put together so good a picture of the times, and so wisely let her actors speak for themselves that we should like to add that she is a good writer. Only she is not. What we want is ease of style, not familiarity. She should not call Cowper 'poor fellow,' or imagine what Macaulay and Hannah would have been like as man and wife. Nor should she allude to Lady Knutsford as the great-granddaughter of Zachary Macaulay, when she was his granddaughter. That lady's father was Sir Charles, not Sir George, Trevelyan; and Bentley should not be substituted for Bentham on page 288. And she should not write a sentence such as this one: 'Hannah More was of the opinion that it was a very good thing for young girls to read Shakspeare (selected).' We doubt whether Shakespeare would have recommended young girls to read the works of Hannah More (even selected). (1911.)

THE AGE OF LOUIS XV

JOURNALS AND MEMOIRS OF THE MARQUIS D'ARGENSON. Published from the autograph MSS. in the Library of the Louvre, by E. J. B. RATHERY, with an introduction by C. A. SAINTE-BEUVE. Translated by KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY. (Heinemann. £2, 2s. net.)

'HEART excellent, mind less good than the heart; the tongue worst of all; but, as for the latter, it is only a habit. My sister, more than my brother or myself, is made in that way.' Such is the Marquis d'Argenson's account of his family. His sister's journals would have been spicy reading, but, in their absence, his own give us food enough for meditation. They are the story of the first three-quarters of Louis xv.'s reign, and French history can hardly show a

more shameless period. Those years are practically the first chapter—the childhood, as it were—of the monstrous French Revolution, and d'Argenson was always predicting it. He records the fierce struggle between Crown and Law about the power of the Clergy; the twelve months' strike of Parliament, during which time it refused to register the Royal decrees; the dignified behaviour of its members, who abstained all that year from appearing in the theatres, as a sign of public mourning; the almost equally long strike of the Courts of Justice, so that the overcrowded prisons engendered an epidemic of the plague; the final victory and reinstatement of Parliament; the inarticulate groans of the half-conscious country-people and of the more wide-awake Faubourg Saint-Antoine, even then a dangerous district, because it was the resort of 'small workmen' who 'belonged to no association.' Or there was the combat between the Jesuits, backed by the Court, and the Jansenists, backed by the nation; not a sincere religious quarrel, as it was in the earnest days of Port Royal, but a venomous personal cabal full of clerical animosity. The Jesuits played the worst part; but Pascal and the great Arnauld would have shuddered at the Jansenists of Louis xv.'s reign. The Grand Style had disappeared from religion as well as from manners.

It was necessary for the indolent King to give himself over to the influence of some one who would govern for him. The State was ruled first by the shifty Cardinal de Fleury, who played the tyrant for seventeen years; then by Madame de Pompadour, who killed political life by her intrigues, and commerce by her demand for luxury. There was no more wheat in the country; foreign grain was exorbitant in price; the peasants were eating grass—and the fact, so well known through Carlyle, gets new force when we read it as the news of the day fresh from M. d'Argenson's observation. The peasants refused to marry because they

would not bring into being creatures as miserable as themselves. Trade had stopped and silk-weavers had to be kept in the kingdom by force. The vintage was ruined by devouring hares—the result of the extension of the nobles' game-preserves. 'The distance,' says d'Argenson, 'between the capital and the provinces seems to increase daily; all goes to the first, nothing returns to the second.' There was no money but in Paris, and there, when the King drove through the streets, the people pressed round the carriage and cried, 'Misery! misery! Bread! bread!' instead of 'Vive le Roi!' The wages of the royal servants had not been paid for three years, the grooms went out a-begging, and there came a moment when the coachman would not drive his monarch. Yet when there was an attempt upon his life all that the *Bien-Aimé* asked was what harm he had done his subjects. The handwriting was clear upon the wall, but the King could not read it. He spent £2,720,000 in pocket-money, and one of Madame de Pompadour's dresses cost £900.

The Marquis d'Argenson came of a political family. His father was a high official, his brother, the Count d'Argenson, one of the most important of the Court Ministers and one of its most successful worldlings. His son was as prominent and more knavish. He himself remained consistently honest, as Intendant, as Councillor, as Minister for Foreign Affairs; and the consequence was that he was quickly dismissed after two years of office. On every public question he showed himself a constitutional aristocrat. He would have called himself a democrat, for he advocated a limited democracy. Lafayette would have loved him; de Tocqueville would have found much to say to him. The Duc de Richelieu called him 'the Secretary of State of the Republic of Plato.' But, for all that, he was an *aristocrate malgré lui*, and he clung to the romance of a Monarchy in France. For Italy he wanted a Federal Republic; he was ever an

enthusiast for tolerance and enlightenment ; he hated the English and admired their methods. On all points he had that inspired common sense which often distinguishes Frenchmen and makes them see far, if not always deep, into things. He knew that politics, to be fine, must be based on regulated enthusiasm, and that when they are founded on animosity they are bound to grow rotten at the core. He knew, also, that France has too often blundered through confounding government and administration. The French are excellent administrators—connoisseurs of detail—but bad governors, and incapable of measuring big issues. It is this absence of large ideas on which d'Argenson constantly dwells as a main cause of the evils that he witnessed, and he thought that they might have been remedied by the creation of a Prime Minister who would have overruled the Court factions. He had the greatest admiration for Sir Robert Walpole, who 'has to manage the smallest little King's mind that ever was known.' He 'never seems busy yet he guides all . . . knowing well the middle course between authority and persuasion.'

Meanwhile, in default of a French Walpole, Madame de Pompadour acted as Prime Minister. She was called 'the second Cardinal,' and she was hated even more than the Cardinal had been. The only one of Louis xv.'s mistresses who had political importance, she kept her power over him for a surprising length of time. Like all lazy people he was the creature of habit, and long after love was over between them she continued to play the part of his plebeian Egeria and welcomed all things, even the presence of her supplanters at Court, in order to keep the reins in her hands. She was as ambitious as Madame de Maintenon and better tempered than the Montespan ; but she was cruel and ignorant, with the cruelty and ignorance of the parvenue who shuts her ears against the misery of the class from which she has risen. Sometimes she did good by accident, as

when she espoused the cause of Jansenism because the Queen loved the Jesuits. D'Argenson compares her to Anne Boleyn, the Protestant influence in Henry VIII.'s Court, but the Englishwoman's religion was less of a cabal than the Frenchwoman's. We may trust d'Argenson's portrait of her, for in all his character-studies—and he gives us many—we find the same subtle penetration and impartial shrewdness. Of the Queen, Marie Leczinska, he gives us a curious impression, very different from that of the pathetic little saint to which the sentimental Saint-Amand has accustomed us. D'Argenson's Queen is a sour, bigoted Spanish woman, who thought it behoved her to assume a haughty air with the King, and never tried to attract him. Mesdames, her daughters, were more interesting. There was the sweet Princess Henriette, who fell in love with the Duc de Chartres and died of a broken heart because, separated from her, he made an unhappy marriage; and the eccentric Madame Adelaïde, who behaved like a despotic man, but, for all that, sent little letters to one of her father's guards; and the timid Madame Sophie, who could only be polite in a thunderstorm—from terror; and Mesdames Victoire and Louise, of whom there is less to say. These poor ladies and the Dauphin fell into a morbid melancholy, caused by the state of things at Court. 'They dislike seeing any one,' writes d'Argenson, 'and never speak to others; their talk is of death and catafalques; they amuse themselves by playing quadrille in their dark ante-chamber by the light of one yellow wax candle and saying to one another with delight, "We are dead." ' As for the Queen, she went 'at all hours to see "la Belle Mignonne," ' that is to say, a death's-head. 'She declares that it is that of Mademoiselle Ninon de l'Enclos. Several of the Court ladies who affect devotion . . . decorate skulls with ribbons and head-dresses; they illuminate them with little lamps and meditate before them.' The decadent are much alike in all ages. It is far

more pleasing to turn to the portrait of the Young Pretender, the brilliant, erratic gallant, who loved Paris so dearly that Louis xv. had to arrest and deport him in order to make him leave it in accordance with the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which forbade France to harbour him. Even then he fell ill at Fontainebleau and returned to consciousness with 'Paris or Paradise !' on his lips.

D'Argenson, as the translator of these memoirs points out, had no feeling for art, nor was he a man of letters. He read books to get ideas ; his criticism is generally moral criticism, and he had little sense of literature. Perhaps this accounts for his meagre allusions to his great contemporaries. 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau, of Geneva, an agreeable author, but piquing himself on philosophy,' does not seem to posterity an adequate description of Jean-Jacques. Diderot he regarded as a dangerous little pamphleteer. Voltaire he admired, but rather as a thinker than an author. Voltaire, on the other hand, told him that he wrote like Madame de Sévigné and ended his note with 'I adore you.' D'Argenson's style is grave and intellectual, not brilliant. His occasional witticisms and good stories flash forth the more clearly for their sober background. Miss Wormeley has entered into his mind and knows well how to render his language. But why, may we ask, does so good a translator make such obvious mistakes in English as to write 'relay him,' 'inspired into,' 'medium' for 'moderate,' and 'buckle down' for 'knuckle under'? These little faults are worth correcting. Sainte-Beuve's introduction to the memoirs, here given us in English, needs no further comment than that it is his ; while the many portraits in the book add charm to its store of information. (1902.)

MADAME DU DEFFAND AND HORACE
WALPOLE

LETTRES DE LA MARQUISE DU DEFFAND À HORACE WALPOLE.
Mrs. PAGET TOYNBEE. Three volumes. (Methuen. 63s. net.)

THE appearance of these letters from Madame du Deffand to Horace Walpole is an event; for instead of the 353 letters which have hitherto stood as the sum-total left—and only 52 of them complete—we have before us three thick volumes, containing 838 letters, and all but six of them are perfect. Of these, 485 have never seen light, besides ten more from Madame du Deffand's secretary, Wiart, written during her last illness and afterwards. Their discovery was a thrilling adventure, which for once fell to the right person. Mrs. Paget Toynbee, whose death has left a sad blank in the world of literary scholarship, was making researches for her recent edition of Horace Walpole's correspondence among the manuscripts in Mr. Parker Jervis's collection in Staffordshire, when she came upon these precious bundles, unknown to their owner, tied together anyhow, and long forgotten. Yet there is no mystery about the story of the letters. Miss Berry, Walpole's literary executrix, first published 52 in entirety and 296 in part in her edition of 1810. Prudence, she thought, forbade her to print more. It was followed by French editions, based upon it, but sadly garbled, in 1811, 1812, 1824, and 1827. After that there was no fresh edition till, in 1859, the Marquis de St. Aulaire produced one with five new letters, given him by Miss Berry, who, he said, had assured him that all the rest were destroyed. But he must have blundered, for Miss Berry tells us in her journal that they were safely stowed in their original box at Strawberry

Hill. And there they remained till the seventh Count Waldegrave sold them to Mr. Dyce Sombre. It was at his death, in 1851, that they passed to Mr. Parker Jervis. A peculiarly discreet providence hid them till Mrs. Toynbee found them. Her notes and prefaces alone make a portrait gallery of eighteenth-century Paris, and, fortunately, she lived to finish the edition, or nearly so. The little which remained to do has been done as she would have had it done by her husband.

We most of us know that Madame du Deffand was blind and bitter; that she wrote to Voltaire and entertained Gibbon; that she turned Mlle. de Lespinasse, her 'companion,' out of doors for stealing her *salon* behind her back; that, at sixty-eight, she met Horace Walpole, fell in love with him with a kind of *amour de la tête*, and, though she saw him only at intervals of several years, continued to write to him till her death in 1780. But it is her self and not her story which is the interesting part of her, and her self stands revealed in these letters of an old woman who could not feel old and spent her age in all the discomfort of rowing against the tide. Apart from her wit, this self-will always keeps her letters fresh, in spite of the established place that they fill on the shelf of eighteenth-century classics. They are almost as well known, though not as well loved, as the letters of Madame de Sévigné, that dead rival in the art of correspondence and in the literary affections of Horace Walpole of whom Madamedu Deffand was so consistently jealous. Superficially the two great ladies were the exact opposite of one another, but deeper down Madame du Deffand had many points in common with the 'Sainte de Livry,' as she called her, in genuine admiration, but without much honey on her lips. Both were Frenchwomen first and women afterwards; sincere, *terre à terre*, sceptical philosophers, with vivid perceptions instead of imaginations, and wits delicately sharpened—mother-wits, not wits cleverly cultivated;

with incredible quickness and powers of expression—the complete equipment of the true critic, in whom appreciation comes first. To both it was natural to live in the moment, Madame de Sévigné with enjoyment, Madame du Deffand with endurance, and the word ‘beyond’ hardly existed for them. Both, too, were cynics of the most impregnable kind—born, not made; seeing things as they are, not as they might be; only Madame de Sévigné was a sunny cynic, and Madame du Deffand a complaining one. Ideas and poetry existed for neither, except as matter for criticism. When Madame de Sévigné wished to swallow Nicole’s theological work in one concentrated *bouillon* and glowed over contemporary sermons, we suspect it was more for their style than, as she thought, for their religion; while the more low-spirited Madame du Deffand made no such confusion, and, belonging to an age which was frankly irreligious, she found no difficulty in proclaiming that style it was which always attracted her. And both were epitomes of their centuries—Madame de Sévigné of the great age of Louis XIV., built on a generous scale, rich in experience, warm-blooded, dramatic, full of contrasts; an age which was officially licentious and rigidly formal, which could at any moment produce a splendid saint from a splendid sinner. Literature, the Church, crime, everything, even the basest Court intrigue, was full of life. No one was tired, and the least tired person in the world was Madame de Sévigné. It was her glory that she happened herself to be an *honnête femme*; her moral judgments were as lax and gay as her generation. As for her faults, they were of her temperament—summer faults, born and bred of the sun. Madame du Deffand, for her part, was born cold and tired, of a cold and tired time, with gaps in her nature which were less human than sins. Louis XV. was no Roi Soleil, and there was little fertilising power in the atmosphere which surrounded her youth—no big, living tradition of art, religion, goodness, or badness. There were

immense wealth, corruption, vulgarity, cabal unredeemed by excitement, and gallantry without passion ; there was pleasure grown mortally old ; in short, satiety, with all its devices to fillip jaded appetites. And if there was no great art or literature, there was society ; there were over-sharpened intelligence and susceptibility, unflagging good talk ; while, instead of the philosophy of thought, there was the other lower 'philosophy,' which made a system of natural instinct and took the dry light of concrete knowledge for the dayspring. The fine flower of this decadence was the *Encyclopédie* ; the issue was the French Revolution.

Into this sphere of satiety and brilliance stepped, born in 1697, Marie de Vichy-Chamrond, born too clever to take herself or others seriously, too clever not to see through her clever world ; too deficient in kindness to forgive it, or do more than despise it ; too much of it to do without it ; too spiritually blind to find refuge or rudder ; incapable of living alone ; too sensitive to bear close companionship. This lonely, dependent woman believed that she lived by the heart, and spent her whole life searching for one—for really it was intellectual stimulus she sought to cheer her ; and this was especially so later on, when she lived in that famous *tonneau* of hers, the armchair in which, a rebel *Diogène*, she sat, year in, year out, increasingly blind and helpless, unpicking old materials which could be made into suits for her friends. A rebel she always was. When she was a little girl at school in a convent, she proclaimed such obstinate heresies that her aunt, the Duchesse de Luynes, sent Massillon himself to bring her back to the fold. The black lambkin owned herself to have been impressed, not by his arguments, but 'by the importance of the arguer' ; and Massillon was in much the same case. All he said when he came away defeated was, 'Mais qu'elle est jolie !' For her the season of youth was soon over. At twenty she made the usual *mariage de convenance* with the Marquis du

Deffand, but he bored her at once and she left him as soon as she could. Her fortnight of intimacy with the Regent was probably the pretext of her separation from her husband. It was followed by other transitory gallantries, and then she got weary of them. The dust remained in her mouth ; but, though she was never *honnête femme*, she developed her own sort of honour and settled into a kind of immoral respectability. Her connection with the President Hénault, which began when she was thirty-three, lasted for forty years ; and however cold-blooded her manner of writing of his decrepitude, her conduct showed disinterested devotion and, if not loyalty, at least fidelity. She hated suffering, yet she sat daily by the doting old man's bedside ; nor did she grow impatient with the gradually deepening melancholy of her other old *habitué*, Pont de Veyle. 'Pont de Veyle,' she said to him one day towards the close of his life, ' . . . where are you ? ' 'Madame, in your chimney-corner.' 'Your feet on the fender, as you should have them in an old friend's house ? ' 'Yes, Madame.' 'It must be owned that there are few connections as long as ours ; . . . fifty years, isn't it ? ' 'Fifty years and more.' 'And not one little cloud the whole time, not the semblance of a huff ? ' 'That has always been my pride.' 'But, Pont de Veyle, don't you think that may be because at bottom we have always been very indifferent to one another ? ' 'That is very likely, Madame.' And yet this was the woman who wrote 'J'aime l'amitié à la folie.' One cannot but wonder whether it is permissible to lead a purely personal life without a heart, or to regard friendship as an investment which should bring you in regular dividends of intellectual or emotional distraction. If life were moral and one wanted a proof of the folly of confounding pleasure and happiness, one would find it in this unhappy old lady. Pleasure was needful to her ; but it is those to whom the world is necessary who find it most hollow ; and it was just when she was perish-

ing of *ennui*, when Pont de Veyle had died and Hénault was in his second childhood, that Horace Walpole appeared on the scene.

She was sixty-eight and he was fifty-two. It is difficult to account for the excessive fascination that he had for her, or to gauge the secret of his influence. There is a partial explanation in the fact that, strange though it may seem, no first-rate man had ever been her friend or even dominated her *salon*. Madame Geoffrin had had Fontenelle and Montesquieu; Madame d'Épinay, Rousseau; Madame Necker, Gibbon. Madame du Deffand received all the stars, but had only second-rate men for devotees. It may have been her self-centred view of life and her bitter tongue which kept sensitive authors and the best talkers from intimacy. And then Horace Walpole, though not first-rate or weighty, was effective. He had a good deal of French elegance and quickness, of English phlegm and reserve. To the French he figured as the Englishman, to the English as a Frenchman. And the Englishman and the Frenchwoman had the same kind of worldliness. Like her, Walpole would have said, 'Les gens du monde, quelque peu estimables qu'ils soient, sont toujours plus amusants que d'autres.' Like her, too, he could have written, 'Je crains tout ce qui m'attriste.' Their attachment grew rapidly and unequally. He wanted amusement and got it; she wanted emotion and did not get it. Already in the first year of their acquaintance, 'Je dirai sans fatuité,' she wrote, 'que si l'on avait autant de discernement que moi, vous seriez le premier homme, non seulement de l'Angleterre, mais de l'univers.' And later: 'J'ai une sorte de crainte et de respect pour vous qui produit de très-bons effets, et vous rendez mon couchant bien plus beau et plus heureux que n'a été mon midi et mon levant.' The sunset was not fine for long. He had more than the average Englishman's horror of being absurd. His answers become a tissue first of cautious and

then of insulting scoldings; she is not to call him 'my guardian,' or to say that she loves him, or to mention the word 'friendship,' or to press him to write oftener. If she does, he will break off their intercourse. Their letters will be opened in the post—he is stalked by fear. And she repents abjectly, implores him not to call her 'Madame,' rejoices when he calls her 'ma petite.' Her occasional flashes of temper die down in submission; and for this we may be thankful, for he compels her to drop emotion and write him letters on other topics than themselves; and gradually, especially towards her end, the storms subside. For the most part, we can judge of his letters only by her answers, as, at his urgent request, she burned those written up to the year 1778. After her death the rest were sent to him—indeed, his determination to get them back seemed his chief thought while she lay dying. He kept them during his lifetime—they were extant in 1870—and it was evidently Miss Berry who destroyed them. By a lucky accident a few escaped, eighteen in all (some incomplete); and of these nine whole ones and two fragments are here published for the first time. Fear generally falls over its own feet. In spite of his precautions, one of the number, a drastic scolding for her excessive friendship, throws more light upon their relationship than any word of hers. But he was so nervous of her eloquence that though, as a literary connoisseur, he kept her letters and probably had meant to publish a chosen few, he freely used penknife and scissors and mutilated them as he pleased. His own, in spite of her enthusiasm, are not good samples of his style. Even she rallies him on his bad French; he is hampered by a language not his own and by his resolution to shine in it. He is always rather apt to think more of the way in which he says a thing than of the thing he has to say, and to make copy out of life; but this is what rendered his company easy for exhausted nerves, and it must be owned, too, that

many a diamond, spiritually speaking, shines among his eighteenth-century shirt-frills.

It is curious to find how one's own feeling changes as one reads on in these volumes. At the outset our sympathy is with the pursued, the pursuer seems absurd and undignified ; but in the end the balance of dignity lies with her and it is the pursued who seems ridiculous. She gave her best, not caring what men said of her, while he spent his time starting at shadows and trembling before public opinion. She must have been terribly trying and hyper-sensitive, but he should have found some more generous way of rejecting her, and it was hardly fair to live on her mind and to refuse all costs. Then, too, our sympathies are naturally with the person who suffers most. Madame du Deffand's moments were agreeable, her days were miserable ; her indifference made her unhappy. Horace Walpole knew nothing but the moment, and enjoyed his indifference ; he was the typical dilettante of his period. Their real bond was their good taste, and it probably impoverished their relationship more than any of their differences. They were tied together by their dislikes—a corrosive kind of harmony ; but her unkindness bites deeper into life than his nibbling ill-nature ; and, though hers is not a *cri du cœur*, it is at least a *cri de la tête*. The letters are, however, not all bitter or quarrelsome. He is sometimes laudatory and benevolent, and constantly considerate ; he watches over her symptoms, directs her diet ; in spite of her dislike of presents, they exchange books and exquisite *bibelots*. And her accounts of her swirling, sparkling world, with its tangle of suppers and politics, Boufflers, Luxembourgs, and Mirepoix, often amuse without stinging, especially when she touches upon the young Duchesse de Choiseul, her *grand'maman*, the only person besides Walpole she really cared for. Like all true cynics, she loved her dog, and her pictures of ' Toutou ' have the fragile charm of a Fragonard.

So has her description of the dressing of a doll for a grand little *Mademoiselle* in a convent. 'Son trousseau est immense' (it was bought by Madame de Narbonne, and Choiseul, the First Minister, gave it a gold and enamel watch)—'cela sera étalé lundi sur une grande table, la poupée au milieu assise dans son fauteuil.'

The woman to whom 'it seemed impossible not to doubt of everything' took to dolls in her most jaded hours: at better moments, to books and conversation. To conversation rather than to books; books, she said, 'forced you to listen to them,' and in conversation 'you could be absent-minded, nor need you talk long on the same subject.' She grew disgusted with books, she tells us, yet she 'never left off reading.' Her tastes in literature were as personal as her views of life. She was, she writes, like the gentleman who said, 'Je ne m'intéresse qu'aux choses qui me regardent.' She hated histories in which one 'only saw kings and generals at the head of their armies,' by authors who 'spoke from the pulpit' and 'were delighted with the beauty of their own style'; she could not bear to hear the crusades or 'anything like them' mentioned; she disliked any wonder which was given out as true or admirable; she 'loved the *Arabian Nights* and fairy stories and some novels—chiefly English novels.' 'J'y trouve des longueurs et des choses dégoûtantes, mais une vérité dans les caractères . . . qui me fait démêler dans moi-même mille nuances que je ne connais pas. Pourquoi les sentiments naturels ne seraient-ils pas vulgaires?' She found Tom Jones 'd'une vérité infinie,' and she liked the fine shades of common feelings in Richardson. She could read *Gil Blas* for ever, because 'la facilité du style est ce qui fait le charme de tout ouvrage et le fait passer à la postérité; il n'y a que les livres facilement écrits qu'on peut relire plus d'une fois. Témoin les lettres de Madame de Sévigné.' 'J'aime tous les détails domestiques—j'aime les lettres de Racine par ce

qu'elles en sont pleines. . . . Dans les lettres de Madame de Sévigné c'est un des articles qui me plaît le plus.' Madame du Deffand was haunted by Madame de Sévigné. She compares that lady's love for her daughter to her own love for Walpole ; she rather acidly proclaims her own inferiority in tenderness, and by 'cent mille lieues' in grace and wit. 'Son esprit n'était que passion, imagination et sentiment ; elle ne voyait rien avec indifférence et peignait les amours de sa jardinière avec la même chaleur qu'elle aurait peint celles de Cléopâtre.' Her comparison of Madame de Sévigné with Madame de Maintenon is a masterpiece of quickness and simplicity : 'Je persiste à trouver que cette femme n'était point fausse, mais elle était sèche, austère, insensible, sans passion. . . . Ses lettres réfléchies . . . d'un style fort simple' ; while in those of Madame de Sévigné, 'Tout est passion, tout est en action . . . elle prend part à tout, tout l'affecte, tout l'intéresse : Madame de Maintenon, tout au contraire, raconte les plus grands événements, où elle jouait un rôle, avec le plus parfait sang-froid. On voit qu'elle n'aimait ni le Roi, ni ses amis, ni ses parents, ni même sa place. Sans sentiment, sans imagination, elle connaît la valeur intrinsèque de toutes choses, elle s'ennuie de la vie.'

The sins that Madame du Deffand never forgave were sins of taste. She liked modesty as much as she despised humility. 'Son esprit,' she wrote of a friend, 'est un grand instrument qu'elle accorde toujours et dont elle ne joue jamais.' As for false modesty, 'c'est de tous les genres de gloriole celle qui me choque le plus ; j'aime mieux l'orgueil à découvert que celui qui a le masque de la modestie.' The moral efforts of others fatigued her. 'Nous croyons toujours plus valoir par les qualités que nous acquérons que par celles qui nous sont naturelles, et nous leur donnons du prix à proportion de ce qu'elles nous coûtent.' Yet often she wearied of her own cleverness and would have been glad to see less clearly. 'Trop de pénétration nuit quelquefois ;

il y a du danger à trop approfondir ; il faut le plus souvent s'en tenir aux surfaces, et se contenter d'y conformer les siennes.' Unfortunately, she had no means of knowing that it was more insight and not less that she needed. Madame du Deffand's chief consolation in her unhappiness was to remind herself that she was not married to M. de Jonzac. It was a negative consolation, and we feel that, except her wit, all the good points in her life were negative. Her best quality, perhaps, was her inability to be glib. When we put down her *Letters* we feel that they are rather inhuman, and full of intimations of mortality. But they are not the first proof the world has had of the gulf that lies between the word 'mortal' and the word 'human.' Madame du Deffand's correspondence will always be read as wit, literature, character-study ; but the best letters—those of Swift, Cowper, Lamb, Byron, Scott, Joubert, Madame de Sévigné herself—were all human first and clever afterwards. That is the reason of their immortal hold upon us. (1912.)

MADemoisELLE DE LESPINASSE

LETTERS OF MADemoisELLE DE LESPINASSE. With notes on her life and character, and an introduction by C. A. SAINTE-BEUVE. Translated by KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY. (Heinemann. 21s. net.)

ONE day in 1809 a carriage started from Chambéry to Aix. It contained Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, and two friends. A thunderstorm broke, the horses stuck, the travellers were endlessly delayed, but not one of them was aware of the fact. For, all the time, Madame de Staël was talking about the letters of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse to M. de Guibert. The subject was worthy of Corinne. That same M. de Guibert, long after Mademoiselle had died, had been her own first lover. And a less fiery party than this was

might well have been carried away by the topic in question. A real love-letter is not easily to be seen. We have had enough and to spare of fictitious love-letters. Of such as are written with an eye round the corner there is still no dearth, nor are examples wanting of the literary kind, in which love is subservient to intellect. But real love-letters are seldom literature, and it is, indeed, a merciful dispensation that they are so difficult of access. It is the more surprising, therefore, that the letters of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse should be both literary and sincere, that they should convince our hearts while they satisfy our taste, and this although they fill a whole volume. No one would have been more shocked than their writer at the notion of seeing them in print, or in any hands but those of the lover whom she had so often begged in vain to return them. We can but be thankful that he disobeyed her. For her letters remain as a classic of passion—rather monotonous, perhaps, as passion is apt to be, but instinct with life and eloquence and a kind of reckless self-abandonment, which has its own royalty about it.

To understand them, however, we must recall her strange story. From her girlhood upwards she had been apprenticed to suffering. Born in 1732, she was the illegitimate child of the Comtesse d'Albon, but early in her existence she lost this most tender mother, who had not even time to legitimise her birth. The little girl found herself a dependent in the household of her cruel half-sister, the Countess's legitimate daughter, who treated her young charge like Cinderella and made her life a burden to her. This state of things lasted till she was twenty-two, and then everything changed for her. Her sister's husband was the brother of the Marquise du Deffand, queen of the *salons* of Paris, who paid his house occasional visits. She discovered Mademoiselle de Lespinasse; she fell in love, she eloped with her. Cinderella was transformed into a

great lady's companion and fellow-hostess. Madame du Deffand, one of the most perplexing characters in French memoirs, was at this time fifty-seven. She was almost blind; she was suspicious, unhappy, successful, preternaturally clever. With all the appearance of a heart she did not possess one, and though she had many susceptibilities she had no feelings. Almost as keen a literary critic as Voltaire, she lived as a wit among wits, and she found her companion an apt and fastidious pupil. But Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was all heart, and only deficient in control over it. For ten years all went well, till Madame du Deffand found out that her subordinate had eclipsed her, that all the frequenters of her *salon* and her oldest friends—the President Hénault, M. d'Alembert, the whole Encyclopædia and Académie, together with several of their Egerias—had gone over to the younger woman, and that she was even receiving them secretly in her own apartment. Madame fulminated; she practically turned out her broken idol; but the idol only removed to a new little *salon* round the corner, and her congregation followed her, d'Alembert in good earnest, for he soon after took up his abode there. As for the forsaken goddess, she never forgave the offender.

One asks oneself what was the charm that drew all these personages—women as much as men—to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and kept them by her side, for no one of them seems to have deserted her. It was not beauty. 'Her face was never young,' says Grimm; and Guibert himself, who did not know her till she was thirty-eight, tells us that 'she was far from beautiful, and her features were still further marred by the smallpox; but her plainness had nothing repulsive at the first glance; at the second the eye grew accustomed to it, and as soon as she spoke it was forgotten. She was tall and well made . . . and her figure was still noble and full of grace.' Her charm lay wholly in the heart and in the mind, and in her power of expressing them.

‘What distinguishes you above all in society is the art of saying to each one that which suits him; and this art, though little common, is very simple in you; it consists of never speaking of yourself to others, but much of them.’ So wrote d’Alembert, and Guibert was not behind him:— ‘She forgot herself perpetually. She was the soul of a conversation. Her great art lay in showing the minds of others to advantage.’ Her wit was rather sober than brilliant—the kind of wit which is in itself an act of hospitality. ‘Her circle met daily from 5 o’clock until 9 in the evening.’ Every person of distinction went to her house, and it is no exaggeration to say that the affairs of the Académie were settled there. Her company was so well assorted that, ‘once there [says Marmontel], they fell into harmony like the strings of an instrument touched by an able hand. . . . She seemed to know what tone each string would yield before she touched it. . . . It was a rare phenomenon . . . the degree of tempered, equable heat which she knew so well how to maintain.’ Had she depended on those who adored her, she would have been a happy woman.

It was between 1760 and 1776 that the drama of her life was played. There were three chief actors besides herself—d’Alembert, who loved her only and whom she never loved, though, for sixteen years, he lived with her on terms of friendship; M. de Mora, her passionate lover, who died of consumption away from her, seven years after they first met; and M. de Guibert, who never loved her, but who swept her off her feet with an overmastering passion for him from the day she first met him in 1772, a year before M. de Mora’s death, to the day, in 1776, when she died of a broken heart. For a short space she was M. de Guibert’s mistress, but for the most part her letters are but cries of mortally wounded passion, or answers to others from him telling her he did not love her. When he married she sympathised and went

on as before, because she thought he had made a mere *mariage de convenance* ; and when she found out the truth—that he had loved his wife for a year before he had married her—she died of it. If we took the bare outline of her history, she would merely figure as an absolute, a classical, jilt ; but this is far from being the case. It must first be remembered that her birth barred her marriage with any man at all her equal ; next (and this is more to the point) that she was always governed by an insatiable *besoin de plaire*. Her adoring d'Alembert told her so in the frank 'character' which he wrote of her, and none knew better than he that this vanity of sentiment led her any length. She even told him that 'she hardly dared think of the happiness it was to be with him,' at a moment when she was dying of her passion for another man, and crying out every day, with unmistakable sincerity, that she prayed to be delivered from 'the slow and painful malady called life.'

The fact was that she could not keep her heart off anybody who came within measurable distance of her, and she would take any trouble for each one of them. It was nothing but this need to please that had made her seem untrue to Madame du Deffand ; no one was in reality so free from calculation, from coquetry, from all the colder qualities ; and what looked like falsehood in her was only her power of loving many people in different ways. 'I am merely a good creature,' she writes, 'very stupid, very simple, who loves the happiness and pleasure of those I love better than what is mine or for me. . . . I have even less indifference than vanity. But I have a strength or a faculty which renders me able for all ; it is that of knowing how to suffer.' What people write of themselves is seldom quite true, and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse knew that she never was stupid and very seldom simple. But she was right about the rest, and her 'faculty' made the unhappiness of three people, to all of whom she really was sincere.

For M. de Mora her flame was purely emotional, drawn forth by this child of the south, and fed by its own poetic force. But for M. de Guibert her passion was both more primitive and more complicated. Her fastidious mind, her intellectual ambitions were in it. Guibert was one of those men of whom his contemporaries expect everything—a meteor that flashes across its age and then falls forgotten to the earth. He was a distinguished soldier, a dramatist, a striking writer on tactics. Besides that, he had a magnetic personality. There is something disagreeably mesmeric in her whole relation to him. She felt that he was her fate; she loved him against her will. At times she hated him bitterly, and she struggled against his ice-cold power. ‘Why did you not leave me in repose?’ she cried. . . . ‘Either fill my soul or torture it no longer. . . . You have made me feel the tortures of the damned, repentance, hatred, jealousy, remorse, contempt of myself and sometimes of you.’ These accesses of remorse began before the death of Mora, whom she told of her new friendship, though he died unconscious of its extent. But after his death her moral torment grew incessant. She was too good to feel otherwise. There were, she said, but three anodynes for her pain—the first was M. de Guibert; the second was opium; the third was music; and this meant the music of Gluck’s *Orfeo*, which turned her sorrow into ecstasy. But, unfortunately, it was only the opium which took effect.

Her letters run through the whole gamut of feeling. Brevity is the soul of passion as well as of wit, and no one is terser than she can be. ‘A soul that has loved him best,’ she writes, ‘has the greatest need of extinction for ever.’ Or take this, one of her daily notes to him :

At all the instants of my life, 1774.

Mon ami—I suffer, I love you, and I await you.

Sainte-Beuve (who also quotes these words in his admirable Introduction to her letters) says that her existence was

‘passed in loving, hating, fainting, reviving—that is to say, in ever loving.’ It is impossible here to chronicle the ebb and flow of her feelings—we must restrict ourselves to their effect upon her character. This was, in some ways, ennobling. ‘Nearly all who exist love only because they are loved. Ah, mon Dieu ! What a poor way ! How small and feeble it leaves the soul !’ she writes. She was fervent by conviction, not by impulse, and she hated reason—‘the temperate zone in which live all the fools and the automata.’ But though she called self-restraint ‘dull courage,’ she practised her own sort of renunciation. For true passion is austere—a cloistral discipline as well as a self-indulgence. No form of asceticism could more rigorously reject the common pleasures of life ; it is the most unworldly and the least conventional of influences. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse hated distractions. To be with M. de Guibert, or alone, ‘but alone without books, without lights, without noise,’ these were the only two modes of life possible to her. The narrower the bed the more vehement the stream, and she grew very narrow. ‘It is dreadful to live to one point,’ she owned, and, indeed, her love became a fixed idea. The result for her mind was a bad one. Her fastidious taste naturally inclined her to scorn, and isolation increased this tendency. Yet she was born a woman of many interests, a wide reader, a delicate critic. She knew alike her Montaigne and her Marivaux ; she relished Richardson and Sterne. It was she who made the reputation of the *Sentimental Journey* in France, and she liked Lord Shelburne because he ‘adored’ Yorick. She nearly went to stay with him in England on this account, and also because he was a leader of the Opposition. She is fond of dwelling on her contempt for French methods of government. ‘Nothing but Voltaire’s fame could have consoled me for not having been born an Englishman,’ she cries. Her power of penetration is like a light sword, flashing, piercing, wounding, and, in a breath, back again in the

scabbard ; and she exercises her skill on everybody, not excepting herself and M. de Guibert. ' I am loved because others believe and see that they are making an effect on me,' she says, ' and not because of the effect I make on them.' And, as for Guibert, ' you are made expressly to enjoy much and suffer little,' she writes. ' You have tastes and no passions ; you have soul and no character. . . . The difference in our affections is this—you are calm enough to enjoy everything ; while I am in Paris, I suffer and I enjoy nothing ; " that is all," as Marivaux says.'

It is a matter for regret that her passion did not oftener allow her to vary her themes. Her criticisms of books and business are direct and subtle ; even her haphazard remarks show a kind of inspired shrewdness and indicate the hand of the intaglio-cutter which carves common sense into aphorisms. If you turn over her letters at random it is not difficult to find a dozen such happy phrases. ' Paris ' (she says in one note) ' is the place in the world where one can be poor with the least privations ; none but fools and tiresome people need to be rich.' And, in another, ' Marriage is a veritable extinguisher of all that is great and may be dazzling. . . . There are men destined by Nature to be great and not happy.' Habit, as a tie, she despises ; ' it is,' she says, ' the sentiment of those who have none,' the ' souls of papier-mâché,' as she elsewhere calls them. The ' public of the moment ' she despises even more, since it ' never has the taste nor the intelligence which sets the seal on what should go down to posterity.' Sometimes she indulges in a bitter grace of her own—in ironical little pirouettes of tongue that none but a woman could make. ' She has nothing to do with loving—she is too charming,' such was her verdict on Madame de Boufflers. And she enjoys mocking M. de Guibert, who is always persuading her to be calm. ' *Mon ami*,' she writes, ' except in one point, let us always be reasonable and moderate.' But

humour and passion are mortal foes, and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's epigrams are oftener pathetic than playful. 'In approaching those who suffer, those who are unhappy, the first question asked should be, "Do you sleep?"' The second, "How old are you?"'—this contains a world of experience.

There was one quality nothing could take from this tragic lady, and that was her practical kindliness. 'The human species is not wicked, it is only silly,' was her not too respectful summary of her fellows, but her deeds were more charitable than her speech. No promised visit from Guibert would ever prevent her from keeping a promise to sit with a sick friend, and she helped with both hands if any distress came her way. We in England have no women to compare her with, unless it be Esther Vanhomrigh; but Swift's victim left no letters behind her, and, even if she had, she would not have expressed herself like the Frenchwoman. Passion makes the strongest people weak and the weakest people strong; but those who have it 'are endowed with the sixth sense, soul.' The words are the words of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and they might stand in her epitaph. (1902.)

A KEEPER OF ROYAL SECRETS

A KEEPER OF ROYAL SECRETS, being the Private and Political Life of Madame de Genlis. By JEAN HARMAND. With a Preface by EMILE FAGUET. (Nash. 15s. net.)

FÉLICITÉ STÉPHANIE DE GENLIS, comtesse, adventuress, governess, copious writer of novels, plays, and homilies, needed a biographer, and M. Jean Harmand has adequately supplied the want. We imagine from the rather faulty English that he has been his own translator, but the occasional mistakes and stiff sentences help far more than a

better translation to give us the atmosphere of France. M. Harmand's biography is of the judicial kind ; he neither loves nor hates, and so his record lacks the warmth which makes the reader one with the subject. We stand outside and are amused. What manner of woman does he paint for us ?

If we could imagine Harriet Martineau improper, Becky Sharp literary, Miss Edgeworth intriguing, we should get something like a true impression of Madame de Genlis. When we think of her as the adventuress, we are pulled up by the governess ; while we contemplate her immorality, we are baffled by her virtue ; and as we shrink from her worldliness, we are confronted by her disinterested actions. Yet to all these seeming paradoxes there is one clue which explains them—the key to her character, and that clue is her boundless love of influence. To this love all her faculties were subservient. She had no natural taste for impropriety. Her irregularities were but assets on the road to power, and directly she could afford to be moral she sank into the respectability that was natural to her prudent temperament. Her virtue, her money, her generosity, she used in the same fashion ; they had no intrinsic value for her, they were but means to an end. Thus it was that in spite of dreadful poverty she had no real love of money and was never purely mercenary ; nor was it more than an accident that, while investing virtue at a pretty high percentage, she grew to like it and ended by identifying herself with the cause of religion and domesticity. In making for moral effects and posing as the adversary of the Encyclopædists, she acquired the principles she professed and preached them sincerely. And her very endowments blended with her appetite for power. Her piquant beauty, her quick grace, the insatiable appetite for knowledge which possessed her from youth onwards, even in the most tawdry phases of her existence, her facility in writing, her accom-

plishments, her genius for private theatricals—on the stage and off it—all helped her to dominate as she desired. But these were minor talents. Her greatest, most original, faculty—that which gives permanence to her name—her remarkable gift for education, was only part of her determination to rule. When she became the governess of the Orléans princesses she found her vocation; and when their father, Philippe Egalité, discarded all precedent and appointed her as *Gouverneur* of his sons, she found her throne—and revealed her weakness. The benevolent tyranny which divorced the children from their mother (her own great benefactress) and kept them wholly for herself, was a crime far worse than her connection of twenty years with Egalité: a beautiful pedagogue's connection, a training of her lover for the State, rather like the relationship of Diane de Poitiers to Henri II. But Diane was more generous, or less potent, than Madame de Genlis, for after early childhood Henri's children returned to his wife. It was unfortunate for the more modern despot that Diane de Poitiers and Madame de Maintenon—the great bad examples for governesses—should have existed before her. In her case no rivalry of any sort was allowed, and Bellechasse, where she lived with her pupils, was soon made too uncomfortable to hold other teachers of any importance.

Yet with this greed was mingled the genuine devotion of the educationist, and something more, perhaps inseparable from it, a rare love of children and a need of them about her. Long after she had ceased to be a governess she adopted plebeian waifs and strays—contracted, indeed, an almost pernicious habit of adoption; pinched, struggled, suffered for them, idealised them, founded their fortunes, and got scant returns. For the sad thing is that, while in children she inspired an almost morbid cult, in later life hardly one of her charges seemed to care for her. Mademoiselle Adelaide, who as a girl grew ill at the thought of

separation, never really renewed their companionship, although for a time, on her return to Paris, she again fell under her sway. Pamela, the mysterious little girl from England, brought up with the Orléans nurslings, afterwards refused to live with her; yet Pamela was generally believed to be her own child and to own Philippe Egalité as father; and the same was reported of Hermine, who came with Pamela and also inhabited the Bellechasse school-room. As for the Duc de Chartres, after his father's death, when he learned Madame de Genlis's true relation to Egalité, he definitely broke with her, and their intercourse under the Bourbons, renewed at her instigation, was due to his fidelity rather than to his affection. This was not, it must in justice be added, because, as was formerly alleged, she had ever taken unfair advantage of his early sentiment. She was frankly bored by the heavy strenuous boy, who would not, she complained, leave her pocket. Long after, Louis Philippe told Victor Hugo that he had only once been in love, and that was with Madame de Genlis. 'I was a weak, idle, timid boy,' he added; 'she made of me a fairly courageous man with a heart. As I grew up I began to see that she was very pretty. I did not know what my feelings in her presence meant. She noticed it . . . and saw her way. . . . She treated me very harshly.' Louis Philippe was scarcely passionate. 'What I love best in the world is the new Constitution and you,' was his idea of a love-letter. He was better suited to Marie-Amélie than to Félicité de Genlis.

Apart from her moral influence, what, technically, did her educational schemes amount to? Louis Philippe recorded that he had received 'a ferocious education.' She left her pupils no peace from 6 A.M. till 10 at night. They slept on hard beds, they learned every sort of manual trade, they endured physical hardships, they were tormented by history and geography, their very walls were hung with

scenes from mythology, and they never had holidays of any kind. One of the Encyclopædists called her *Madame Livre*, another a 'Hen-Rousseau.' M. Harmand truly says that she is a mixture of Rousseau and *Madame de Maintenon*. But she was much more than a pedant or a theoriser. She was a pioneer, almost a genius. She foreshadowed our system of hygiene, she enforced air and exercise, she imposed gymnastics upon girls as well as boys. Girls had also to study national law and the management and farming of land. In other ways she was before her time. She decried the classics and laid great stress on modern languages; she taught history by dramatic representation. But, while she used the means, she characteristically missed the end of education—self-dependence. Her pupils were never left alone for a moment. It remained for Miss Edgeworth, who imitated all her methods, to apply them to the right purpose. And her plans had another flaw, this time a modern flaw—they were wholly utilitarian. She had no notion of disinterested knowledge; there was always an axe to grind, even where the arts were concerned. It was the same with regard to religion. She instilled piety, she did not know how to be spiritual. If, as M. Harmand says, she created a model bourgeois King, she also created his religious indifference. The power to risk and to succeed was her heritage. Her adventurous mother and her impecunious father, *Pierre César du Crest*, were well provided with both talents. When the girl was thirteen (1759) she and the mother set forth on a sordid little *Odyssey* of intrigue. No Minister, no Farmer-general, was too old for long exploiting visits from them. Wherever they went they took her harp, which showed off her white arms to perfection. She had trained hard to be a Siren, and had practised her instrument almost too much to attract any sailor of distinction. At last she caught the *Comte de Genlis*. Some mystery hangs over their casual but by no

means unhappy union; one thing, however, is clear—that her husband's grand relations would not receive her. The couple retired to the Comte's *terres* at Genlis, and there Félicité set earnestly to work to achieve notoriety and thus effect an entry into society. She ran about the countryside with a barber, bleeding the reluctant peasants; she rouged the nuns in a convent; she had milk baths. It took her two years to accomplish her end, and she finally reached it through private theatricals. Arriving unexpectedly in Paris, in a peasant's cart, she began business. She made herself indispensable to a few houses through her acting, her harp, her serviceable ways; ignored aristocratic snubs with a smile; picked up *en route* the grand manner that she lacked; began to be talked about, invited; achieved her master-stroke by contriving to charm the old Duke of Orléans and becoming his guest at Villers-Cotterets, a house rather tabooed by virtuous ladies; negotiated his marriage with her step-aunt, Madame de Montesson, and was appointed as lady-in-waiting to the wife of his son, Philippe Egalité.

Thus she found herself in the Palais Royal, and her real life began. Ere this her husband's family had relented; she was fêted and adulated everywhere. Over her new mistress she soon acquired the same hypnotic influence that she exercised later upon the Orléans children. The poor Princess adored her, would listen to no other counsellor, and, remaining quite unconscious that her Genlis had already stolen her husband, was enraptured when she became her daughter's governess. Then began the cruel and unequal duel between one of the cleverest and one of the stupidest of ladies. For the wife of Philippe Egalité (who had by this time succeeded to the dukedom), although affectionate and high-souled, had the most hidebound of Royal minds. She hated her husband's politics, and treated her son's nobler liberalism as a shocking form of madness; she had,

he said, all the prejudices of 'a disgusting aristocracy.' It is doubtful whether she could ever have understood any intelligent child—she was too well-bred and inert. When the crisis came and she felt she could no longer endure the governess, she would not trust her timid speech, but came to Bellechasse and imperiously read aloud her accusations and Madame's dismissal. Madame went, but was at once summoned back to save the life of Mademoiselle, who had nearly died of sorrow. Egeria Victrix returned to reign triumphant. Even her public enemies, such as La Harpe, capitulated in private. Her *salon* was frequented by every star of the day. Rousseau had already adored her and discharged her as corrupt, because she had sent him a present of some wine; Cramer, David, most artists and musicians, were her friends; so were Brissot and Pétion; so at all times was Talleyrand. The pair had made acquaintance in the early days of her marriage, when he was still an unknown abbé. Throughout their lives, with every change of government, they met—generally crossing the road to the sunny side together. It was rumoured that he once wished for closer relations, and it is curious to think what would have happened had these two skilled foxes formed a co-operative alliance. But it did not suit Félicité's game. She was the most phylacteried of pretty Pharisees. In 1779 she published her *Théâtre à l'usage des jeunes personnes*, in 1782 her manifesto of education, *Adèle et Théodore*. She now turned her attention to the Revolution, as a fresh asset in her fortunes. For was not Philippe Egalité near the Regency, perhaps the throne? She became an enthusiastic 'Red.' The night after the taking of the Bastille she danced—and she made Chartres dance—with the 'Maenads' in the Palais Royal garden. Attired in a tri-colour dress, she gave a ball for the Orléans children, where they danced to the tune of 'Ça ira.' She had the Duc de Chartres made a member of the Jacobin Club and a

contributor to Marat's newspaper, and meanwhile she lent her views the glamour of novelty by continuing to be pious and to fight the *Encyclopédie*. But no strategy could stem the coming danger, and the security of her charges necessitated absence from France. In 1791 she took Mademoiselle and the lovely Pamela to England, where for a year they lived and saw the best society. They lodged at Bath, they lodged at Bury; they went to stay with Sheridan, and he became engaged to Pamela. Orléans, however, suddenly summoned the party back that they might not be branded as *émigrées*. Madame dallied; they arrived too late for safety, and were compelled to set forth again at once. Madame de Genlis and Philippe Egalité parted for the last time. The fugitives went to Tournai, which was close to the quarters of General Dumouriez and to those of Chartres, who was serving under him. They were accompanied by a new friend, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who quickly eclipsed Sheridan and married Pamela off-hand. Madame, meanwhile, was active, conspiring with Dumouriez. She became involved in his peril and was forced to fly for her life. It seemed to her that the delicate Mademoiselle would increase her own dangers, so she resolved to leave her 'daughter' behind—'with all a mother's affection and blessings.' Stealing away from the sleeping girl, she got into the carriage; but Chartres was too quick for her. He ran upstairs, caught his sister in his arms, and threw her, shivering, into the chaise. The inevitable harp was sent after her—her clothes were not. Dire adventures beset them. At one moment they only escaped the Austrians because the General mistook the governess for his lady-love. At another, Mademoiselle developed scarlatina. But at last they reached Switzerland alive, and there Chartres joined them. There, too, the news reached Madame de Genlis, first of her husband's, then of Philippe Egalité's execution. Chartres had already departed to pursue his own way, and, some six

months later, Mademoiselle went to live with her aunt, Madame de Conti, at Fribourg.

There began for Madame de Genlis a life of fresh intrigue, of persecution, debt, incessant wanderings : through Switzerland to Altona and Hamburg, where she came across Talleyrand ; to Berlin, whence she was chased at two hours' notice ; it was said that she was conspiring, manœuvring, endeavouring to pervert the musical Frederick by means of her redoubted harp. Back she travelled to the north of Germany ; then, on Frederick's death, back to Berlin—always in deepest poverty, making a bare livelihood by her indefatigable pen, by lectures, by giving lessons. She shared her last penny with her secretary ; she taught the harp to orphans, and adopted them ; finally she engineered her way into Berlin society. ' Society ' there meant the Jewish *salons*, which were crowded with French nobles. Madame de Genlis made herself invaluable to Madame Cohen, Madame Herz, Rachel Levin (later Rachel Varnhagen). When Paris was once more open to her, Madame Cohen came to offer her all her diamonds on condition she should stay on in Berlin. But Paris was irresistible. She returned there, and, fixing her hopes upon Napoleon, she imported a new set of principles. She believed she could convert him to religion. Impervious to the harp, he was susceptible to manners. He took her for the representative of the *ancien régime* ; he allowed her to write him a weekly letter on morals and literature ; he wept over her novel *La Duchesse de la Vallière* ; he granted her apartments in the Arsenal. But she changed lodgings as often as she changed politics ; the only things that did not alter were her debts. The Orléans were kind, but she got few favours, and she grumbled at the meagreness of the pension that Louis XVIII. eventually allowed her. Yet it saved her from destitution in her last years. She died in 1830 at the age of eighty-four, and Louis Philippe gave her a handsome funeral. She came to

regard herself as an Archbishop. 'M. de Valence,' she said, 'has taken that strong liking for me that all people have had when seriously ill.' The art of literature was to her first and foremost a pulpit, and a facile pulpit. She published eighty-six works, and she made 'copy' out of life from the day when, her new-born baby by her side, she wrote her *Réflexions d'une mère de vingt ans*. Emile Faguet, in his charming preface, says that 'her place is in the front row of women of letters of the second class.' But the teacher was stronger than the author, and her precepts were stronger than her practice. (1913.)

ALWAYS A BOURBON

LA DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS, MÈRE DU ROI LOUIS PHILIPPE. By
BARON ANDRÉ DE MARICOURT. (Paris: Emile-Paul Frères.
5 francs.)

WHEN we lay down this most absorbing book, admirably written, and based on documents private and printed, we find the prevailing sensation to be one of wonder that so much goodness and so much silliness could be found united in a single person. That person had to be a woman; a man could not contain so much of either element and yet have both. And that woman had to be of Royal blood to ensure her being so noble, so pious, so uncomplaining in martyrdom, of such incorrigibly bad judgment, and so desperately unteachable.

C'est vrai, et je le répète :
On n'est pas bon quand on est bête.

Whoever said that—was it not Diderot?—showed a thorough acquaintance with the Ancien Régime. And perhaps it is not too much to aver that a truly good man is one who

reaps use from experience—whatever, moral or immoral, that experience may be—while a bad man is barren, one who has the experience and gets nothing from it. The Bourbons could all of them dip seven times in reality and come out as unreal as before. In so far as Marie-Adélaïde de Bourbon Penthièvre, Duchesse d'Orléans, great-granddaughter of Louis XIV., passed through the red waves of the Revolution and proved herself afterwards more indulgent, more saintly in facing hardship and in understanding human distress—in so far she stands out as a good woman. When the Revolution broke down barriers for her, she was free. But she could not clear the main wall. A hundred Revolutions would not have shaken her belief in the divine right of the aristocracy to everything, a code for conduct that ran alongside of the greatest personal unselfishness. Indeed, her very goodness was in part of the *noblesse oblige* kind, a payment to Heaven for the privileges it conferred upon the Bourbons. She lost most of those she loved by the guillotine; two of her children died of the results of their imprisonment; she herself knew incarceration, exile, destitution, mortal illness; she had been face to face with violent death. But nothing could give her a grasp of facts.

What is chiefly known about her is her miserable marriage with Philippe Egalité, her passionate love for him, his infidelities, his final capture by that remorseless feminine bandit, Madame de Genlis, and her second capture of the Duchess's children, a theft which left the poor lady in much bitterer bereavement than death could have brought her. That Philippe Egalité was a wretch, though too light even to be weighed, that his conduct towards the Duchess was abominable, nobody could deny; yet she alone it is who produces in us some kind of sympathy for him. For all her high soul and her generosity, she must have been a provoking wife. More than one witness records how she never ceased to cry; her eyes were chronically red from

weeping ; and her aggrieved caressing letters to her children were much more about herself than about them. Madame de Genlis ruined her life. Some one else would have done that as far as her husband was concerned, but none except that born teacher, that 'agreeable little rascal,' could have robbed her of her sons and her daughter. There were, however, other reasons to cause the separation. The Duchess's dispute with her husband was ostensibly a religious one and regarded the training of their children. Madame de Genlis and Egalité had recourse to the new priests who had taken the oath of fealty to the Nation. To the Duchess this was as great a sacrilege as a confession of atheism ; and her heart was almost broken when her eldest son, the Duc de Chartres (Louis Philippe), answered her letter of exhortation and command with, 'Not only have I no scruple in going to one of the new parish priests, but I regard this step as an indispensable duty, for I firmly believe that the decrees have not made any sort of attack upon the dogmas of religion.' Nothing could have so well measured the victory of Madame de Genlis, the gulf between the Duchess and her family, or her utter solitude, as this passage. Strange mixture as she was of the monumental-marble weeping aristocrat, the drooping lady of urns and broken columns, and of the feudal heroine who could well have held her husband's castle against an army ; of the Lady Byron who longed to reform a husband, and the passionate woman crying out for his love at any price ; she could on occasion act with surprising force and matter-of-factness. To the shocked surprise of everybody, most of all to that of Egalité (for aristocrats did not usually act thus), she instituted legal proceedings against him in order to secure her large fortune for her children, and firmly pursued her course.

She had gone home to live with her father in Normandy at Eu, and at other of his numerous country places. It was

here that the Revolution found them. Nothing in this record is more acute or more significant of the prevailing terror than the way they received the news of the death of the Princesse de Lamballe, the Prince's *chère belle-fille*. The tidings reached the house at midnight by a special courier from Paris. M. de Miromesnil, the Prince's guest and faithful friend, undertook to break the news to the Duchess, still in bed. In the early morning he walked into her room, solemn horror stamped upon his countenance, the letters the post had brought her in his hand. Directly she saw him, anguish seized her; she asked breathless questions; 'the No's and Yes's, Madame, follow one another till the cruel word, the glacial word, the word "dead" is uttered.' In silence the two, with their pale attendants, enter the bedroom of the sleeping Prince, already in the clutch of fatal illness. He wakes to find the group there with faces turned to stone, the Duchess covering hers with her hands. There was a pause; then 'the old Prince . . . averted his eyes. . . . He had understood.' Happily for him, he died naturally, before the guillotine could take him, and so much beloved of his vassals that his coffin, attended by proscribed priests, was allowed to proceed unmolested.

His death began a series of tragic adventures for his unprotected daughter, ending by her transference, in a moribund condition, to Paris and the Prison of the Luxembourg. She was one of those women who are always dying and never dead. Unable to walk, excepting with two people to help her, ashen-coloured and grey-lipped, suffering torments, she yet survived till 1821. In the prison she found her old society; its members met daily, and daily they decreased; they talked and talked 'with some lightness and much heroism'; and every hour the Duchess listened for the echoing footsteps to stop at her door and presage the end. But though she did every tactless thing, writing explanatory reams of protest to the Republic instead

of allowing herself to be forgotten, nothing happened ; and on the plea of her health she was eventually removed to the less rigid confinement of a *maison de santé*, one of those lunatic asylums used by the Terror for such prisoners as had influence enough to loose the bolts, and organised—at least in this case—by exploiting scoundrels who charged their captives exorbitant prices for bare garrets and for food worse than that of the prisons. It is interesting to realise that, these abuses once discovered, the Republic investigated the matter like the most orderly Government in the world, and shipped off the guilty proprietor to the galleys.

In spite of all, the Duchess slowly recovered, as much as she ever recovered, thanks partly to the open air, but much more to another cause ; for here it was, in this misused lunatic asylum, that, in 1794-95, she met her fate—the man who ruled the rest of her life. And to add to the strangeness, this Rouzet was the son of a tailor and a member of the Convention, a partisan of those who had murdered her family and desecrated all she held most sacred. It is true that he had the courage to oppose the execution of Louis XVI. and to try to save the lives of the condemned ; that in after days, under the ægis of the Duchess, he became a fervent Royalist. But none the less surprising was this relationship—as it would seem, erratically platonic—which lasted, without a break, for twenty-six years or more. Almost from the first, he gained a complete and, on the whole, a beneficial ascendancy over her. Twice he saved her life ; he did much to help in the deliverance of her two younger sons, so cruelly imprisoned at Marseilles ; he worked away to rescue her fortune and to get her compensation. He gave her money ; he was her servant and her sovereign. Only a high-flown Princess and a Gascon could have brought this friendship off. When the Duchess was granted her freedom, in spite of all her projects, she stayed on in the

asylum with Rouzet ; and when she was sent, an exile, into Spain with the old Prince de Conti, and the *berline* was searched at the frontier, there, beneath a pile of rugs, the discomfited devotee was found hidden.

It was an awkward position for a member of Parliament ; and the Government sat solemnly upon the question, but decided in favour of love. So Rouzet was allowed to accompany his lady into Spain, where her cousin, the Bourbon King Charles VII., soon turned him into Joseph Rozet, Chevalier de l'Ordre de Malte and Comte de Folmon. In spite of the long letters she sent his Majesty about her destitution, this was all he did for his poverty-stricken relation, except to give her a worn-out leather chair for her vermin-infested castle. Here she kept a crazy Court on nothing a year, with Rouzet as her Chancellor and housekeeper ; and a shocking one he was, starving his lady and her guests, jealous, devoted, honest, feckless. Sometimes his wife, who had appeared suddenly in France from the provinces, arrived to make a contented third on this uncomfortable hearth, and disappeared again as calmly as she came. The two friends were absorbed in one another, and Rouzet gradually sapped all the rest of the Duchess, till she ceased even to try to see her children and let the two young Princes, Montpensier and her once much-loved Beaujolais, die far away from her. When her daughter at last joined her after years of separation, Mademoiselle found the position insupportable and finally left her. Nor did Chartres, the best of sons, fare much better. At Naples, whither his mother went to promote his marriage with the Princess Marie-Amélie, she quarrelled violently with the affable couple because she said that they had slighted her Count. That gentleman allowed her no margin for any one but himself, unless it were for the convenient poor, who did not hurt his vanity and to whom she never ceased to give every penny that she did not give to him.

The writer of this volume ascribes her *grande passion* to middle-aged sentiment and to a hungry heart. But that hardly accounts for her choice, or for her fidelity. To those victims of the Revolution who had lost all—their loved ones, their every landmark—it must have seemed that the only possible condition of living on was to make a completely new life, divorced from what went before, a life that would drug memory and blot out old associations. And this was what the Duchess, doubly embittered by hopeless separation from her children, succeeded in doing. By the time she could once more see them, it was too late. The result was inevitable. When the Restoration brought her back to Paris, prompted probably by Rouzet, she engaged in fierce money disputes with her family, and Louis XVIII. had to interpose. But by whom was the reconciliation between mother and children effected? By Madame de Genlis. And by the intervention of what ambassador? None other than the Comte de Folmon. Strange cotillon, strange *chassé-croisé* of partners. Madame was charmed with the Count; she had a private interview with the Duchess; she lavished eulogies and affection. Once more she won the game and joined what she had put asunder.

The remainder of Marie-Adélaïde's life was spent between Paris and Ivry in trying to revive a past that was gone for ever. 'We give one another little presents, little foolish things that charm us,' wrote a friend of the Ancien Régime who still made one of her small circle; 'I find again in her that old manner of arranging and of loving comfortable things which causes me such pleasure.' Such things also pleased the ruling deity. If any guest took the seat at table that was sheltered from the draught, he was summarily removed. It was the chair of Monsieur le Comte de Folmon. There was in these last years but one poignant recall to bygone misery. It was when the widow of Egalité had an

audience with Louis XVI.'s daughter, the deep and narrow, the unforgiving Duchesse d'Angoulême. Trembling, the Duchess prostrated herself. '*Grâce, Madame, grâce!*' she cried. Madame let her drag herself two or three times along the ground. '*Relevez-vous, Madame,*' was all she said; and, after a few stiff words, the interview ended.

The Duchess died in 1821, of an agonising illness borne with un murmuring fortitude. The Republican Duc de Chartres found himself at sea as to the etiquette proper for the funeral. There was one person he knew who could inform him. Again it was Madame de Genlis. In death, as in life, she dominated her victim, and she said that the funeral was as well arranged as possible for the honour of the Duchesse d'Orléans. (1914.)

ROBERT SOUTHEY

LETTERS OF ROBERT SOUTHEY. A Selection edited by MAURICE H. FITZGERALD. The World's Classics. (London: Frowde. Oxford: The University Press.) 1s. net.

OF Robert Southey it might without exaggeration be said, 'of such is the Kingdom of Heaven'—not the highest zone in the kingdom, but the part reserved for the useful angels, the angels without wings, for its generous banks and benevolent societies. He was a born administrator; had he taken office in the New Jerusalem it would have been on its Local Government Board. And—a good test—he was an angel to fallen angels; one who would always cross the road to bind up their wounds, although he lectured while he doctored; one who was wont to leave more than twopence for their entertainment. Short of what he needed for his family, the whole of his purse was at the disposal of his friends, especially of those who trod the narrow way. Any

reader of his correspondence who will take the trouble to keep count of the contributions he gives to needy acquaintance, and to compare them with his hardly earned income, will come away humbled and surprised. Such a letter as that in which he starts a scheme to collect enough to buy an annuity for poor, depressed John Taylor of Norwich, who had fallen upon evil days, acts like a cordial on the heart; and so does his eloquent appeal to the friends of Coleridge—who was, as usual, missing—to send his son Hartley to Oxford. He gave what is better worth than money—he gave himself, without stint, without weariness; and in the midst of a strenuous, over-worked existence spared no pains to be of service to whoever made a call upon him, whether it were to solicit a post, to read manuscripts, or to give advice. No obscure poet wrote to him without getting a full answer, no despondent man came away without practical comfort, comfort bestowed by one who had gone into the case like a doctor and had a doctor's faith in his prescriptions. 'In my moments of reverie,' he wrote in 1800, 'I have sometimes imagined myself such a character [a confessor]—the obscure instrument in promoting virtue and happiness.' And, like a confessor or a doctor, it was his business—and his weakness—not to be mystified by any form of human suffering. He had a ready medicine for every ill: for tormented poets clear lessons in construction; for religious doubters clear spy-glasses to show the moral reefs ahead; for those in sorrow Epictetus.

I have heard of men [he says] who, when their wives have died, have suffered everything belonging to the dead to remain precisely as they left it for years and years—the music-book open, the shawl thrown across the chair, the fan or parasol on the table—and this till they died themselves. This is insanity; but one can understand its nature and growth. If ever I become insane it will not be in this way. There is the same

excuse for drunkenness and debauchery as for over-sensibility. Twelve years ago I carried Epictetus in my pocket, till my very heart was ingrained with it, as a pig's bones become red by feeding him upon madder.

And Southey practised his precepts ; nowhere is he braver or more lovable than in the letters he writes in grief. In his youth the loss of his great friend at Oxford, Edmund Seward, gave his soul a shock which early inured him to death ; and his strength did not fail him when there fell the blow which changed the world for him—the death, at ten years, of his idolised boy, Herbert, the centre of his hopes and happiness. It broke his heart, but not his faith.

Wherefore do I write to you [he asks a friend]? Alas ! because I know not what to do. To-morrow, perhaps, may bring with it something like the beginning of relief. To-day I hope I shall support myself, or rather that God will support me, for I am weak as a child, in body even more than in mind. . . . I am wanting in no effort to appear calm and to console others. . . . Many blessings are left me—abundant blessings, more than I have deserved. . . . I have strong ties to life and many duties yet to perform. . . . Reason will do something, Time more, Religion most of all. The loss is but for this world ; but as long as I remain in this world I shall feel it.

Skiddaw and Helvellyn were stern masters to him, as they were to his neighbour Wordsworth. Not that the poets got on too well ; perhaps both had too much self-control and self-esteem to suit one another ; each needed a weaker man to influence and to guide. 'It seemed to me,' says De Quincey, 'as if both had silently said, "We are neighbours, or what passes for such in the country. Let us show each other the courtesies which are becoming to men of letters ; and, for any closer connexion, our distance of thirteen miles may be always sufficient to keep us from that."' Indeed, Southey had no time for visits. His work was his armour, his staff, the only power, excepting his faith, which

helped him through the darkness of loss and reconciled him to life. Pen-driving was such a habit with him that he could return to it at once, almost before death was out of the house. Perhaps no man of letters ever worked so hard. The books by which his name is known are as nothing to the complete list. From the day in 1796 when Joseph Cottle, that kind godfather of so many heavy infants of the Muse, printed *Joan of Arc*, he never ceased to produce. Besides his endless prefacings and editings, anthologies, annual registers, and copious articles, he published some thirty-three original works, three-quarters of which he believed to be immortal. Several of them were long histories needing years of arduous labour, many others conscientious biographies. Haunted by the need of providing for his family after his lifetime, he even made an inventory of the friends his letters to whom he wished to be published at his death, and asked one of them to mark at once such passages as he thought suitable for print. He always kept five or six of his tasks upon the stocks, some poetic, some in prose, and wrote at each in turn, the sole condition on which he could keep his mind going without a breakdown. The result was inevitable. Quantity and quality were too often confounded. And in the end Southey's worst fears were realised. When the last blow fell upon his spirit, worn by grief and toil, and his wife went mad, he worked on for five years and then, at sixty-five, his over-burdened brain gave way. But till that time, even after his boy's death, his life kept a pleasant tenor. 'I have taken again to my old coat and old shoes,' he writes in 1824, 'dine at the reasonable hour of four, enjoy as I used to do the wholesome indulgence of a nap after dinner, drink tea at six, sup at half-past nine, spend an hour over a sober folio and a glass of black-currant rum with warm water and sugar, and then to bed.' His great excitement was the arrival of books by coach or wagon—wagon was

cheapest. Those were the days of the romance of parcels, when a horn announced them and they might cost a guinea to receive (as did Southey's parcel from Miss Barker) if they were sent by the wrong conveyance. Scott's and Landor's poems travelled to him in this fashion; London friends took such opportunity as offered to send him collective packets and add to the provision of his library, that library which was to him an empire. And then, not infrequently, came guests; old friends who arrived to stay and shared his long daily walks over hill and dale, like Coleridge, who took up his abode with him ('Colridge's Room' still stands large upon the door of the best apartment in the house) and ended by depositing his family permanently beneath Southey's wing; or casual visitors, like Shelley, at nineteen, living near by, in lodgings with Harriet—Shelley who appeared at tea-time and, in the abstraction of discussion, ate, one by one, the dish of buttered crumpets on which Southey had counted; many others, too, less known to fame. And here we come to what was, next to literature, the serious business of Southey's life—to friendship. It is seldom that an author occupied in creating has been so steady and unselfish a friend to many—and a friend, it must be added, so unexciting. 'The tone of Southey's animal spirits,' writes De Quincey, 'was never at any time raised beyond the standard of an ordinary sympathy; there was in him no tumult, no agitation of passion. . . . Cheerful he was, and animated at all times, but he levied no tribute on the spirits or the feelings beyond what all people could furnish.' This was both his strength and his limitation, and in either respect he misread his powers.

For Southey never knew what he was like. The strange thing about him is that a useful angel was the last thing he wished to be. He believed in himself as a genius and as the friend of genius. Never did such a reasonable man build such a reasonable structure upon such an unsound

basis. 'There is an evil,' he writes, 'in seeing all things like a poet ; circumstances which would glide over a healthier mind sink into mine ; everything comes to me with its whole force—the full meaning of a look, a gesture, a child's imperfect speech, I can perceive, and cannot help perceiving.' This was his view of himself. But he never knew that genius was inaccessible ; and he thought that it could be acquired by perseverance and right habits. He prided himself upon writing *Thalaba* and the *Curse of Kehama* before breakfast ; he begged Bernard Barton never to write at night, lest he should make his Quaker connections think the poet's profession not respectable ; his chief aim, he said, was to trace the progress of morality in history ; he used, as we know, to write half a dozen works of genius at once—and yet he believed himself to be like the youthful Shelley.

Here [he wrote] is a man at Keswick, who acts upon me as my own ghost would do. He is just what I was in 1794. His name is Shelley. . . . He is come to the fittest physician in the world. . . . It has surprised him a good deal to meet, for the first time in his life, with a man who perfectly understands him. . . . I tell him that all the difference between us is that he is nineteen and I am thirty-seven ; and I daresay it will not be very long before I shall succeed in convincing him that he may be a true philosopher, and do a great deal of good, with £6000 a year.

This was a droll sort of 'perfect' understanding. Eight years afterwards Southey was writing to tell his 'ghost' that he was a propagandist of monstrous depravity. He had not the eye to see that Shelley's failures came from aiming too high, not too low—from too many principles instead of too few. While Southey took fact for truth, Shelley took truth for fact and acted on the assumption. Southey's error was the deeper of the two, but, unaware of it, he lost his chance of modifying the impressionable poet.

Byron he regarded as Satan; and Murray, he says, is 'implicated with him in the disgrace which must attach to every person concerned in bringing forth *Don Juan*.' Upon *Elia* he pronounces that 'there are some things in it which will offend,' and, truly though he loved Lamb, he wrote of him almost as of a reprobate; of Coleridge he came to talk as of the person whose bad example had first taught him the use of self-restraint in conversation. A man may be bewildered by genius, or he may reverence it, but he may not sit and disapprove or be cocksure about it. A genius puts the whole of his being and all his powers of restraint into his art, he has little left over for daily life; while a man of talent invests but a part of himself in his work, he makes spiritual economies enough to live on.

But Southey did not think himself a man of talent. His disapproval was all part of his fundamental mistake. As he believed himself to be a genius, and knew that he could behave and control himself, he felt convinced that all geniuses were capable of self-government if they would but try to be regular. The error induced the strange sort of Pharisaism which has alienated so many from him. He admired himself, but then he was admirable. And we love him through it all because he was so simple and sincere. There is morning dew upon his self-esteem; and, if he was the hero-worshipper of himself, he certainly lived up to his ideal. That is why the greater men he reproved—greater than himself—continued to love and trust him; why Lamb and Shelley wrote him answers of such large and gentle charity that only goodness could have called them forth; why even Byron behaved nicely to him when he met him.

The same almost childlike delusion permeated his view of his writings. Southey was essentially the man of letters. His Muse was his wife, not his mistress: his wife who during his short absences awaited his return upon the doorstep, and was ready to make tea for him—too much tea. But

Southey thought otherwise. He knows of no poem equal in originality to *Thalaba* except the *Faerie Queen*. 'With Tasso, with Virgil, with Homer,' he says, 'there may be fair grounds of comparison, but my mind is wholly unlike Milton's.' His article on education was to 'set the question at rest for ever'; and 'there can be no doubt,' he writes, 'I shall be sufficiently talked of when I am gone.' As for his *History of Brazil*, 'ages hence it will be found among those works which are not destined to perish . . . it will be read in the heart of South America . . . and be to the Brazilians what the work of Herodotus is to Europe.' The *History of Brazil* seems to have been the favourite nursling of his brain. 'English books,' he writes from Holland, 'are so scarce here that they have never seen any work of mine except *Roderick*. Of course I have ordered over a complete set of my poems and the *History of Brazil*.' Rather a heavy p.p.c. card for his Dutch hosts, the Bilderdijks.

All this is, perhaps, a unique instance of megalomania in a sane man, but it is so naïve as to be disarming. Hannah More, the rival moralist and benefactor—in many ways his feminine counterpart—thought much the same as he did, but was far too wary to say so. Southey was humble before God, humbler than Hannah; and to understand them both we must remember their amazing contemporary reputation. There is a vanity so childish that it is not incompatible with heaven, and Southey's vanity was coupled with a nobility which made him behave as well when he suffered worldly disappointment as he did when on the crest of the wave. He had, too, the purging grace of the power to admire others as heartily as he admired himself. His fervent feeling for Landor is a beautiful thing, and so is his affection for Walter Scott. And there can be but little harm in a quality which he himself so frankly exposes in his letters to his friends. No one who has not read those letters can know what good

company Southey must have been. They are racy, stringent, and sincere, full of limited insight and of prejudice—a seasoning flavour in correspondence. His wit ran narrow, but it ran deep, especially in the early years of his manhood, when the letters are best and full of sound and pungent criticisms. As he grew older his natural perspicacity was rather dimmed by his high Toryism, and his pen grows heavier. But he seldom fails in vivid, one-sided portraiture—whether of Hartley Coleridge, ‘the oddest of all God’s creatures . . . totally destitute of anything like modesty, yet without the slightest tinge of impudence in his nature’; or of ‘little Mr. Quincey’ (‘I wish,’ he says, ‘he were not so little, and I wish he would not leave his great-coat always behind upon the road’); or of Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh*—the ‘homunculus of five foot one, with a face which upon a larger scale would be handsome . . . enunciating his words as if he had studied elocution under John Thelwall, of whom indeed he is an Elzevir edition in better binding.’

But the best portrait that he gives us in his letters is, after all, the portrait of himself. We see him innocently revealed here as he was: a soul without guile, unspotted by the world; a man of talent, the perfect friend of men of talent; a poet, whose best poem, an unwritten one, was his love for his boy—a love which, he tells us, ‘passed the love of women,’ and was ‘more lightly alarmed than the wakefullest jealousy.’ It is by what men are unconscious of in themselves, by their being, not their doing, that they achieve the most. And it is not by his deeds, or his works, not even by his *Life of Nelson* or his *Life of Wesley*, that Robert Southey will live, as he believed he would. His enduring monument is his goodness. (1912.)

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

A CENTURY—and perhaps no less—gives the needful perspective to a poet, and enables us to assign him his place on the roll of the immortals. Still more is this true of a poetess, perhaps because there are few of her kind, perhaps also because women's personal histories are more inextricably bound up with their work than is the case with men. And now that a hundred years have passed since Elizabeth Barrett Browning's birth, it is easier than before to appraise her for what she was. There are few of those born in the fifties and the sixties who did not feel the glamour of her song while their day was still at the spring. To them she represented youth in its strength and in its weakness; youth with its confident flights towards the sun, its humbled and heavy falls to earth, with its optimism and its morbidity, its scorn of seemings, its power to live by illusion. And when we re-read her poetry by the light brought by time, it is the person, not the poet, who lives most. Her poetry as poetry is imperfect. She is an incomplete artist, but a complete woman; and it is as a complete woman that she will stand and endure. When we use the word 'poet' we mean, of course, a professional poet. Every woman is a poet, and she, who was more intensely woman than other women, was, in this way, a past-mistress of poetry.

The *Sonnets from the Portuguese* remain her masterpiece—a real work of art, because they are the fullest expression of the woman in her; and, better than these, the best poem that she created, was her own life with her husband. This is perhaps the reason why she is comparatively little read by the present generation; the woman of one age seldom speaks to the 'business and bosoms' of her followers fifty years later; and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in her rebellions as much as in her sentiments, was Early Victorian

in seeming, although new and untried forces lay below. The lyre is no longer in vogue; it has given place to other instruments more scientific than musical. Authors are not now photographed as they were in the time of long ringlets—as she was—pensive, unassuming, intense, with the Coliseum behind her; for great backgrounds have also gone out of fashion. ‘E. B. B.’ lived in the days of great backgrounds; of great causes and great awakenings; the days of Victor Hugo and Garibaldi; of Kingsley and Carlyle and the Chartists; of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; and of fermenting ideas, both in politics and in art. The walls which then fell before trumpets were the walls of respectability—a city which, though rebuilt, has never again occupied the same dominant position. Unconventionality has even become conventional, so that many of the barriers that Elizabeth Barrett Browning made against it have ceased to interest her less struggling successors. Her attitude to moral questions, to women and to the poor, to art and its relation to Nature, has grown to be the general attitude of cultivated people—so general, indeed, that we are apt to undervalue her as an innovator.

O Magi of the east and of the west,
 Your incense, gold, and myrrh are excellent!—
 What gifts for Christ, then, bring ye with the rest?
 Your hands have worked well: is your courage spent
 In handwork only? Have you nothing best,
 Which generous souls may perfect and present,
 And He shall thank the givers for? no light
 Of teaching, liberal nations, for the poor
 Who sit in darkness when it is not night?
 No cure for wicked children? Christ—no cure!
 No help for women sobbing out of sight
 Because men made the laws? No brothel-lure
 Burnt out by popular lightnings?

Thus she wrote in the year of our Great Exhibition, seated at her ‘Casa Guidi Windows,’ and it required some courage

to publish the lines. That the ideal should have its roots in the real, that the real, to be true, must be enkindled by the ideal, in matters of human love as well as in matters of art, such was her spontaneous message as much as it was that of her husband. Their purpose was the same, but he proclaimed it in tones strong enough to reach farther than hers. And though it sounds ordinary now, it did not sound so then, when the art of Ary Scheffer and the cult of sentiment were in vogue.

‘Beloved,’ it sang, ‘we must be here to work ;
And men who work can only work for men,
And, not to work in vain, must comprehend
Humanity and so work humanly
And raise men’s bodies still by raising souls,
As God did first.’

‘But stand upon the earth,’
I said, ‘to raise them (this is human too,
There’s nothing high which has not first been low ;
My humbleness, said One, has made me great !)
As God did last. . . .

The man most man
Works best for men, and, if most man indeed,
He gets his manhood plainest from his soul :
While obviously this stringent soul itself
Obeys the old law of development,
The Spirit ever witnessing in ours,
And Love, the soul of soul, within the soul,
Evolving it sublimely.’

This passage from *Aurora Leigh* is idealism, but not of the rosy kind ; it is the idealism which sees the ideal in the real, often in the ugly ; which resulted in *Les Misérables*, in the pictures of Jean François Millet, in Rossetti’s painting of ‘Found,’ or in his poem of *Jenny*. Thus, Early Victorian though she was in inward form, she stood no less at the parting of the ways, at the source of modern art, and hailed the rising sun. Her tendencies were forward and, at whatever time she might have lived, she would have been of *les jeunes*, unmindful of personal risk as long as

some one reached the goal that many made for. The juvenile audience at a *Gay Lord Quex*, the babes fed on Ibsen, can afford to smile at Thackeray's rejection of 'Lord Walter's Wife' as being too 'strong' for the *Cornhill Magazine*; yet, mild as it seems to us now, to the in-seeing eye it contains the germ of much—of the whole protest of the spiritual against the material view of love. It requires a woman's hand to rend the veil from coarse fact with sufficient delicacy; to know where to lift, and where to drop it; and Mrs. Browning was practically the first who dared to attempt the task. Mrs. Hemans belonged to the literary generation before her, George Eliot to the one which followed after.

Nowhere has she shown more of her delicacy and courage than in her chief work, *Aurora Leigh*, and nowhere has she more clearly worked out her message. For the outcome of the poem, the solution of the questions there set forth, is the marriage, after many struggles, of the ideal with the real; of Aurora Leigh the poetess, who believes in working first upon the souls of her fellows, with Romney Leigh the philanthropist, who believes in working first upon their bodies. It is the union of idea and action, both, as she teaches, inadequate half-truths till they join forces. And the book is rich in other notes characteristic of her singing. The wronged Marian Erle, who lived only for her nameless child, stands out as the embodiment of the mother-love which was so strong in Mrs. Browning herself. And all the society characters in the story, however unnatural they may be, serve to prove, as she herself says elsewhere, that

This age shows, to my thinking, still more infidels to Adam
Than directly, by profession, simple infidels to God.

There are obvious absurdities in the work. But Aurora and Romney live—in imaginative fashion; and even Marian Erle, though she does not make us believe in her,

often revives in our eyes some sketch by Rossetti of Miss Siddal, so poetically pure that it seems as if comparison with fact would detract from its own inherent truth. The whole theme of the poem recalls the kind of themes chosen by the Pre-Raphaelites—Holman Hunt's 'Awakened Conscience,' Rossetti's 'Found,' Martineau's 'Last Day in the Old Home.' There are other things to remind us that the poetess was writing at the time that they were painting—the same desire to defy conventions and return to Nature; the same amassing of detail, sometimes to the detriment of the whole; the same chivalry and strenuousness; the same handling of a realistic subject in a mystic spirit, producing an unreal effect. There is, however, one wide difference between Mrs. Browning and the 'P.R.B.'s.' Purity of form, a clear-cut outline, were essentials of their art. Not so of hers. Her forms are defective, and often either rough or blurred; she seems to be so much absorbed in pouring out the new wine that she does not care much about the shape of the old bottles. It is this which makes us feel, when we put down *Aurora Leigh*, that she would have written a fine novel; but of one thing we are sure—that we have not been reading a poem. It may be urged that she composed it in adverse circumstances. 'She wrote in pencil, on scraps of paper, as she lay on the sofa in her sitting-room open to interruption from chance visitors . . . simply hiding the paper beside her if any one came in.'

And if her sense of form were found lacking only in this work the excuse would hold. But this is not so. Her poems, however sweet, are nearly always redundant, unconcentrated, too long and overcrowded with images; full, too, of the repetition of thoughts that vary but slightly from one another. The sonnet may perhaps be taken as a final proof of the sense of form possessed by a poet. It must be so condensed, so clearly outlined; it must supply the want of space by depth, it must be exquisitely wrought

with lines deftly interlaced. But Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnets do not stand the test; they are too unchiselled, too wordy. We except, of course, the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, because there the white heat of feeling does the work of the potter's furnace, and gives them a shape of their own. But take *Discontent*, or *Tears*, or *Cheerfulness taught by Reason*, and you will wonder why they were ever cast in sonnet-mould instead of being written as lyrics. There is a certain hymn-like quality about them, as, indeed, about many of her verses, which mars their strength and their design. And this will be felt the more if you compare them with the work of her contemporary, Christina Rossetti, the only other poetess whose name can be mentioned with hers. Many of Miss Rossetti's poems are hymns in subject and intention, and yet they remain pure poetry because their distinction of feeling is enshrined in distinction of form; because their burning intensity refines, but never destroys, the vessel which contains it. Each sonnet in the *Monna Innominata* series is in itself a crystalline gem, giving joy by its mere sound; while even the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* would not satisfy us apart from their meaning. Miss Rossetti had the Catholic mind; Mrs. Browning's spirit was Evangelical. Miss Rossetti, concentrated and cloistral, was the completer poet; Mrs. Browning, prodigal of herself, absorbed in helping the world, was the greater and the richer-natured woman. Nor are her poetic defects unaccountable. She lived before all the talk about form that has since become current coin; she had a fatal facility in rhyming and no self-conceit to make her cautious. And, although, fine Greek scholar that she was, she had a delicate ear for the classics, she had no wish to return to their methods. 'Pan, Pan is dead,' she cried; her generation had a new song to sing, and she deliberately gave to all form a place of secondary importance. 'To bring the invisible full into

play, let the visible go to the dogs ; what matters ? ' was her motto as well as that of Robert Browning ; and, in her eyes, nothing did matter so long as the end in art exceeded the means.

Mrs. Browning had another faculty which is often a substitute, and sometimes a dangerous one, for form—the faculty for melody. It is this which gives to certain of her lines a magic, a pathos, they cannot lose. This and the gift that she possesses of evoking associations ; of reviving scents and sounds of past years, of making us live in the past—the past, for which she herself had a close and almost morbid affection. ' I am strongly a creature of association,' she once wrote to a friend ; and her love of harking back for herself was as strong as her power of looking forward for the world. Such sentiments are almost inseparable from the melodies which clothe them, and there are certain of her verses, seldom whole poems (except, perhaps, *The Poet and the Bird*, or *A Musical Instrument*, or *Catarina to Camoens*), that haunt the brain because of their tune-fulness.

In the pleasant orchard-closes
 ' God bless all our gains,' say we ;
 But ' May God bless all our losses '
 Better suits with our degree

is like a snatch of song. And the *Mountain-gorses* ever golden—

Ye whom God preserveth still,
 Set as lights upon a hill,
 Tokens to the wintry earth that Beauty liveth still—

are not likely to be forgotten. No more is *Isobel's Child* :

The poplars tall on the opposite hill,
 The seven tall poplars on the hill,
 Did clasp the setting sun until
 His rays dropped from him, pined and still

As blossoms in frost,
Till he waned and paled, so weirdly crossed,
To the colour of moonlight which doth pass
Over the dank ridged churchyard grass.

The worst, perhaps, of this melodic gift is the speed with which it cloys and degenerates—its easy appeal to the crowd.

Unless you can muse in a crowd all day
On the absent face that fixed you ;
Unless you can love, as the angels may,
With the breadth of heaven betwixt you ;
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,
Through believing and unbelieving ;
Unless you can *die* when the dream is past—
Oh, never call it loving !

—lines such as these have too much of the tune that every man can learn. And yet can we quarrel with the defect, when it was this very quality of popular emotionalness that enabled her *Cry of the Children* to contribute, as no other poem has done, to a reform in the law of the land—one of the noblest achievements ever accomplished by art ? Nor did she lack other talents which corrected her diffuseness. Now and again she shows an inconsistent turn for aphorism, as in *Casa Guidi Windows* :

An ignorance of means may minister
To greatness, but an ignorance of aims
Makes it impossible to be great at all.

or in *A Vision of Poets* :

Knowledge by suffering entereth
And life is perfected by Death.

The painter's gift, too, is hers. It often seems as if she wrote with a brush rather than a pen, and her descriptions of Nature, whether in England or in Italy, show her at her best as an artist. She saw, she says in a letter of 1854, ' the wonderful Terni by the way—that passion of the waters,

which makes the human heart seem so still.' And earlier in the year, 'Oh those jagged mountains rolled together like pre-Adamite beasts and setting their teeth against the sky—it was wonderful,' she writes from the Baths of Lucca.

If we think of Mrs. Browning's many-sidedness, our wonder at her character grows. She had lain on her couch between four walls for twenty years of her existence, suffering constant pain and weakness; and her soul triumphed over both. Shrinking as she did from contact with the unknown, she had the courage at forty to know and to grasp life when it came to her in the guise of love; she did not flinch from her secret marriage, or from her wedding journey to Italy; and once there, in the full blaze of happiness at last, she did not, as would be most comprehensible, relapse into sublimated selfishness, but spent herself in thought for others. The cause of the Italians, struggling for a united Italy, absorbed her energies. She loved altars, she loved the flame upon them; and she kept her fires faithfully alight, for Mazzini, for Louis Napoleon, for Garibaldi, and, most of all, for Cavour. 'I can scarcely command voice or hand to name *Cavour*,' she wrote at his death. 'That great soul which meditated and made Italy has gone to the diviner Country. If tears or blood could have saved him to us, he should have had mine.'

In her great-heartedness and public spirit, Elizabeth Barrett Browning is nearer to George Sand than to any of her own countrywomen. George Sand felt for the French Republic of her dreams the same passion of hope, of disenchantment, of untiring aspiration that the Englishwoman felt for Italy. But, in Mrs. Browning's case, disillusion did not last, and no *coup d'État* stained the fame of Victor Emmanuel. Both were women of 1848, the period of eternal youth, which seemed to give those who lived through it the power of never losing their ideals. Both were inveterate believers. Both were generous democrats whose

written pictures of the poor were idylls rather than realities. Both would rather have renounced their pens than ceased to succour human suffering. Perhaps this is but another way of saying that both were inspired by ardent maternal devotion, lavished on their own children first, then on the countless children of others. But strong as is the likeness between these two leaders of the Romantic school, in the main functions of life their positions were exactly reversed. If Mrs. Browning was incomplete artist and complete woman, George Sand was the opposite. Complete artist she was—but she was incomplete woman.

Thou large-brained woman and large-hearted man
Self-called George Sand ! Whose soul amid the lions
Of thy tumultuous senses moans defiance—

thus Mrs. Browning addressed her. Yet while we see George Sand's 'woman-heart beat evermore through the large flame,' we have to own that the 'man' in her played too strong a part. '*Je me hâte de vous confesser, ma Juliette, que pour une femme c'est une infériorité que se déféminiser,*' she said in her old age to Madame Adam.

That was an error Mrs. Browning had no need to renounce. Robert Browning and his wife will live as classics in perfect married love, as well as in the realm of poetry. And typically woman as she was, she was also what few women are—creative. 'You are wrong—quite wrong—she has genius,' said Browning to one who admired his work more than hers. 'I am only a painstaking fellow. Can't you imagine a clever sort of angel who plots and plans, and tries to build up something—he wants to make you see it as he sees it, hammering into your head the thing he wants you to understand ; and whilst this bother is going on God Almighty turns you off a little star—that's the difference between us. The true creative power is hers, not mine.' Shall this stand as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's epitaph ? We will but add some words of her own from one of her

letters: 'I can't look on the earth side of death. . . . When I look deathwards I look *over* death and upwards, or I can't look that way at all.' (1906.)

THE BRAHMAN OF CONCORD

JOURNALS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON. Vols. ix. and x.
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'EMERSON,' said the East Indian Mozoomdar, 'had all the wisdom and spirituality of the Brahmins. Brahmanism is an acquirement, a state of being rather than a creed.' 'Emerson,' says Lowell, 'awakened us, saved us from the body of this death. . . . Were we enthusiasts? I hope and believe we were, and am thankful to the man who made us worth something for once in our lives.' 'He was,' says Mr. Birrell, 'once upon a time, and for a long time, a veritable sign in the heavens.'

Where, we ask, as we put down these last two volumes of his journals, is all this power now? As far as the present generation is concerned, it is over. This is a fate common perhaps to great teachers. They form a generation more potently than they write books; they make the men who directly follow them; and just because their work is living and visible it cannot endure unchanged like a book. The next age suffers reaction, and the influence of the teacher lives on only as a cause of oscillation. There are many reasons why Emerson does not suit the young people of to-day, why he even irritates them. Any academicness is their bugbear; and Emerson is a spiritual don, adoring youth, yet speaking to it from a terrace of higher ethical wisdom and with an assumption of knowing its needs. Emerson was suave, serene, uncircumscribed; no man holds sway at this moment who does not hit straight from the shoulder, who is not vehement and definite. How

could ether-loving Emerson prevail at a time when men alternate between Nietzsche and Newman? He was vague at an hour when men were revolting from Calvinism and wanted vagueness. 'If I asked what was left, what we carried home,' writes Lowell, 'it would have been enough if we had said that something beautiful had passed that way.' 'Something beautiful' would ill suit the modern conscience, which is so subject to the despotism of the strident and the abnormal. But is it enough for any conscience? Is the food offered sufficiently solid to nourish us? It is not altogether the fault of this generation that Emerson—in England at least—has ceased to concern it. There are other reasons, and these journals reveal more than one of them.

To begin with, Emerson's serenity—born, not made—includes serenity as regards himself. He is almost smug.

When I wrote 'Representative Men' [runs an entry of 1863] I felt that Jesus was the 'Representative Man' whom I ought to sketch; but the task required great gifts, steadiest insight, and perfect temper. . . . Theodore Parker, of course, wished to write this book; so did Maria Child in her 'Book of Religions,' and Miss Cobb, and Alcott, and I know not how many more.

This is too much and not enough—it is shallow. And where warm imagination was needed, or multiform perception, shallow Emerson sometimes was. What understanding reader of Racine, Ronsard, Boileau, would let pass these observations on French classicism?

I think I can show that France cleaves to the form, and loses the substance; as in the famous unities of her drama; and in her poetry itself; in the whole 'classicality' of her turn of mind, which is only apéry.

The fact is that Emerson's vision was limited; his gifts were great but they were few, and as an artist he was

inadequate. He judged everything—art, poetry, even Nature—by its effect upon conduct. His very philosophy often fails, intellectually speaking, for this reason. It is neither pure thought nor pure sentiment, but something between the two. He could not keep it disinterested, free from morals. And his sentiment falls short in the same way. It is too intellectual, too unwarmed by human sympathy. When he writes, in 1864, that ‘they who should be friends cannot pass into each other. Friends are fictions founded on some single momentary experience,’ we feel his words to be no calm victory after conflict, no sign of self-mastery, but rather the expression of a lack in him. A wistfulness here would have made him richer.

Perhaps this brings us to the main reason why just at present Emerson is forgotten. It is not because he is an idealist, but because his idealism was not deeply enough rooted in reality. He knew too little of the fray, of the shoulder to shoulder jostle in the market-place; and, if not too much of Adirondack philosophers, too little of the poor and unrepresentable, of sorrow and suffering, of life’s violence and life’s contrasts. His intimacy with the sublime needed these contrasts as justification. He was, so to speak, the high priest of spiritual respectability—sanctifying it sincerely, yet remaining hierarchical. But this kind of want is precisely that which is least pardoned by the young who come after; the want, also, least remarked by contemporaries, when accompanied, as in Emerson’s case, by such forcible personal magnetism.

Mozoomdar was, indeed, not wholly right. If Brahmanism is ‘a state of being rather than a creed,’ Emerson was not a true Brahman. Almost unconsciously, he tried to make being into a creed—after the practical Western fashion, which asks for spiritual results. The Brahmins are mystics; Emerson was a transcendentalist; and fine though the shade between the two looks at first, it is really

a strong line of division and involves a profound difference. Mysticism is never vague ; it always means experience—definite experience in an indefinite region. But it leaves the indefinite indefinite. Emerson, on the contrary, attempts to define the indefinite ; to feel after some spiritual formula sublimated beyond recognition, flexible and floating as ether, in which to imprison the infinite. He is a kind of celestial doctrinaire. For transcendentalism is not experience, it is thought ; it is born of the intellect ; it is, at best, the expression of experience. Plotinus, Behmen, Law, Blake, Wordsworth can testify to states of being as clearly as if they were conversions ; these states are part of their human lives. But Emerson's testimony takes shape in beautiful thoughts, in eloquent ideals, in winged reflections, in things said and not in human documents.

It is interesting under this aspect to look at Emerson and Wordsworth together : at least in their attitude towards Nature. Wordsworth may moralise about Nature as much as he pleases, but that is not Wordsworth. The true Wordsworth is non-moral, is almost Nature herself. She sweeps him into her being ; their relations towards one another are quite simple, like those of mother and son. Emerson says starry things about earth and sky ; he talks of the universe with Thoreau ; he continually considers Nature's mysteries, her import, but he never seems quite simple about her. He has nothing of the peasant's feeling which entered into Wordsworth's love of the earth ; or of that unreflecting mystical instinct which makes Nature an end in itself.

And there is another reason why Emerson is bound to fail to-day. Men cannot help being idealists, however they disguise the hated fact ; and our modern anarchy, our cult of chaotic ugliness, seems to be little more than a kind of inverted idealism. Fifty years ago men of science were proud to be materialists ; they had made of matter an

austere goddess, nearly akin to truth and worthy of good men's worship. Now, materialists are so uneasy about that goddess, about her status and her respectability, that they are trying to achieve the impossible, and in literature, painting, music, to wring a kind of mysticism out of matter. They are doctrinaires of anarchy; they have no use for another doctrinaire with a hostile and a truer form of idealism. This idealism it is which constitutes the interest of Emerson's last journals. They cover a period of twenty years, from 1856 to 1876, and they tell of his lecturing tours, of his farewell journey to England, Paris, Italy, of his home life, and of days in the Adirondacks; but they might for the most part be written anywhere. Wherever he went he inhabited the land of ideas and spoke its language. And though, here and again, he gives that vivid touch of portraiture which had lent his pen such distinction, the personal note is generally absent from these pages. There are too many generalisations; for he who tries to define the indefinite is bound to land in large assumptions; and sometimes his conception outruns his power of utterance and leaves his expression obscure. But as a rule it is clear, even though it is elaborate, and his creed might quickly be epitomised from these volumes.

The intellectual power [he writes] is not the gift, but the presence of God. Nor do we reason to the being of God, but God goes with us into nature, when we go or think at all. Truth is always new and wild as the wild air, and is alive.

All physical facts are words for spiritual facts, and Imagination, by naming them, is the interpreter, showing us the unity of the world.

The imagination gives all the value to the day. If we walk, if we work, if we talk, it is how many strokes vibrate on the mystic string.

The way to the centre is everywhere equally short.

And the centre it was that Emerson made for. This is

what constitutes his permanent value in the world. He proclaimed the immanence of the Divine to an age that had just escaped from the vindictive despot whom it called Jehovah. Such a notion of God we of to-day have left far behind us, and we feel none of the relief of deliverance. But Emerson's faith, whatever its momentary fate, still has living use: it serves as an abiding defence against reactionary influences. Its very foibles help it; its elusive abstract quality is too indeterminate to provoke a retrograde movement, a return to authority. And in this time of extremes, when those who are not supermen take refuge from spiritual responsibility by running back to systems, ritual, tradition, Emerson's large unemotional outlook affords us no unsafe entrenchment. (1914.)

SAINTS AND MYSTICS¹

SAINT, mystic, hero, idealist—each of these words bears a distinct meaning, yet we constantly use them interchangeably, and rather too mistily. This, perhaps, would not much concern us, were it not a fact that vague conceptions are apt to be incompetent and to befog spiritual issues. And the question seems to have a sharper point just now when biography has been setting before our eyes such great types of sainthood, heroism, and the rest; when, in the course of one year, Florence Nightingale, Octavia Hill, St. Vincent de Paul, have lived again in printed pages; when from our midst has passed away the poet—the practical poet—of citizenship, Canon Barnett; or when we read the record of the less known, no less striking, Mother Mabel Digby, Mother-General of the Order of the Sacré Cœur

¹ [A paragraph on heroes, which was inserted in haste and did not satisfy the writer, has been omitted in this reprint, and some sentences written after the article had appeared have been added.]

through the dark days of the recent persecutions in France.

What, first of all, is a saint? A saint is an artist in holiness, one who is good for the joy he feels in goodness without ulterior aim, who forgets his own soul in his love for the souls of others. He is, if you like, a spiritual genius, the owner of inaccessible secrets of sanctity, of which he is unconscious, by which he lives. Above all, he loves good more than he hates evil. Pascal, however holy, was for this reason no saint. He dreaded sin more than he loved his brother men. He invented the omnibus for the poorer of them, but he shrank from association—from the risks of love. He was happier fighting the Jesuits than in fellowship with Port Royal. The true Puritan can perhaps never be the true saint; for the power of enjoyment, the saint's enjoyment of holiness, lies at the root of saintliness, and he says 'Thou shalt' before he says 'Thou shalt not.' It is asceticism which has proclaimed him as the enemy of the artist, and so misapprehended the significance of both. Saint and artist, alike, delight in self-expression, it is the condition of their being; and to both the outward form is inseparable from the inward meaning.

A saint is necessarily a mystic, but a mystic is not necessarily a saint. A mystic—to sum up briefly—is one who lays stress upon being rather than upon doing, while a saint holds the balance between the two; he expresses being by doing, and regards the one as incomplete without the other. Being, it is true, must come first; it is the essence of holiness, and works without faith are nought. Prayer and contemplation with him become an energy—an action for others; and a life of love for mankind there must be to prove belief. A mystic, in so far as he is a mystic, feels no such necessity; the one thing needful for him is the direct communion of his spirit with God. For the rest, he may neglect his fellow-creatures, he may even be inhuman,

as some mystics have been. The only demand he makes is for the heights, for those peaks which in themselves encourage remoteness. The ecstasy of intercourse with the divine, the intoxication of solitude he must have, and he must have them often; but these very conditions are far from helping a return to common life, or acting as a barrier to intellectual scorn. The true mysticism implies abstract intellect, the true sanctity does not. The mystic asks for light first, the saint for fire; and the highest and rarest types are those in which both elements are made one.

Of these types of a high altruism, as of the hero, one thing can equally be said: each one is an idealist; each one sees what might be in what is, and strives to realise his vision. The love of the ideal is, so to speak, the common source from which saint, hero, mystic draw their spiritual sustenance. And saint, hero, mystic are again alike in this: they care for goodness in preference to morality, often in opposition to it. To them the garden is all-important, the fence that guards it not so—that paling which each generation in turn knocks down and builds up anew, according to its especial needs. And goodness also, although it is not destroyed, is re-defined by the good men of every age. They have sought purity by many and divers ways; through asceticism and superstition, through control over Nature and through knowledge; but their fundamental object is always the same. They endeavour to set the will free from the ego, to make human beings less selfish and more themselves, to follow after kindness and to learn love. Sincere goodness, like sincere art, is an attempt to wrest what is permanent out of the transitoriness of things.

The way to live with God is to live with ideas—not merely to think about ideals, but to do and suffer for them. Those who have to work on men and women must, above all things, have their spiritual ideal, their purpose ever present.

I believe . . . in the service of man being the service of God, the growing into a likeness with Him by love, the being one with Him in will at last, which is Heaven. I believe in the plan of Almighty Perfection to make us all perfect. And thus I believe in the Life Everlasting.

The mystical state is the essence of common sense.

These sentences, the last above all, make the epitome of Florence Nightingale's creed. And, under the heading 'Drains,' 'the question,' she wrote, 'is not whether a thing is done for the State or the Church, but whether it is done with God or without God.'

I care very little to express faith anywhere but in life [said Octavia Hill]. . . . God has been always pleased to build His best bridges with human piers, not angels, nor working by miracles; but He has always let us help Him, if we will, never letting our faults impede His purposes when we struggled that they should not.

The people round, and all we see and hear, leave a kind of mark on us, an impression of awe, or pity, and wonder, or sometimes love. . . . How hard it is to do justly and love mercy and walk humbly.

In God [wrote Canon Barnett] we are alive and move and have our being. . . . Through God we can therefore act on others. Prayer is work.

It is unbelief in God which makes much effort ineffective . . . not disbelief, but just unbelief in a Power Whose will is being done.

In each of us [we quote St. Vincent de Paul] there is a grain of the almighty power of God, and that should be a great motive for hope.

If we take a person who fixes his love on God only—a soul . . . which has soared in contemplation, and . . . limits himself to this unfailing source of satisfaction, and does not trouble himself about his neighbour; and then take another who loves God with his whole heart and for the love of God loves his neighbour also, however faulty and repulsive . . . which of these two . . . has the most perfect sort of love?

As it is the function of fire to give light and warmth, so is it the function of love to spread the sense of love.

In the pronouncements of these four great pioneers—the three modern contemporaries, the fourth, their predecessor, the creator of lay charities two hundred and fifty years before them—we shall first be struck by the likeness, by the same mystical note in each. Work in God and through Him is their gospel. And thus they escape all the perils of mysticism. Like wine, mysticism is dangerous when drunk alone without food. Every sacramental thought needs both bread and wine. And to each of these four vision seemed useless without action. But further reflection reveals deep differences. In the sayings of Florence Nightingale the intellectual quality leads, the abstract mind is there; intellect also it is which is salient in the utterance of Canon Barnett. But in the words of Octavia Hill and of St. Vincent it is the heart which predominates, the personal element which inspires them. The first two make for the good of the world; the last two for the good of the individual soul. The first two are spiritually minded reformers; the last two are saints. Not that feeling is absent from the reformers—far from it; but it is feeling sublimated by thought: the saints also think, but their intellects are kindled by emotion. In the case of St. Vincent it is far more than this. Although he had the nature of the saint, and so the saint in him came foremost, his capability was as signal as his holiness. He was the initiator of organised charity outside the cloister—of the Sisters of Charity, bound by no convent vows; of outdoor relief, of aid to convicts, of hospital reform; he utilised the wealth and service of the women of fashion for that Hôtel Dieu of Paris which, from being a den of infection, became the prototype of modern institutions. He did the organising work of a Florence Nightingale on starvation diet and under sternest

discipline, yet never lost his personal touch of every human soul with which he dealt, or his large and warm indulgence for every one excepting himself. But he was an exception, and the distinction remains between the saint and the intellectual reformer. It is no mere subtlety. It means a real division between two classes of people important for the work of the world. What does that difference signify? Can we find the answer if we study these great achievers?

Among them three were creators. The fourth, Canon Barnett, was an inspirer, a source of action rather than an originator. He was an idealist, a converter of the real into the ideal, the bearer of a message. And his message was that the perfect citizen of London was no less the citizen of the unseen city of God. But the remaining three stand for concrete realities introduced by them into the world: St. Vincent for organised charity; Florence Nightingale for the modern hospital for nursing, for Army reforms; Octavia Hill for the housing of the poor, and for her civilising system of personal rent-collecting. Only St. Vincent was equally endowed as a saint and an organiser. Florence Nightingale was a practical genius, a mystic, and a hero—not a saint; Octavia Hill was a saint and an inspired reformer, with remarkable practical gifts which grew from her inspiration.

Both these women had vocation in the truest sense. Each set herself apart in a cloister made out of a great purpose, yet moved freely in the world. Miss Hill was more of the artist, swayed by form and colour, compelled by love of Nature. Miss Nightingale was more of the thinker and the scientist; statistics moved her much, Nature affected her but little, and when, as rarely, art stirred her, it was for its moral import, as in her enthusiasm for Michael Angelo. Her friendship for Jowett, that of Miss Hill for Ruskin, were like symbols of the two women's natures. But the main difference between them lies in their attitude

towards their fellow-creatures. Octavia Hill loved them ; Florence Nightingale only loved the subjects of her kingdom—her soldiers, her nurses, her colleagues ; for the rest she had a good deal of intellectual scorn—which included all those who did not suit her. The enemy she chose to fight was official stupidity, and that is not the enemy to soften contempt. ‘ Man must create mankind,’ such is her own summary of her belief that through our mastery of the laws of health and social welfare we form each other, body and soul. But a creator is presumably superior to what he creates, and such a creed as hers does not foster the spirit of indulgence. She was annoyed when her staff married, and in her eyes work always came before family ; she felt no need of seeing her own unless they were helping her achievement. Not that separation mattered ; all great pioneers in goodness have had their call ; have, at whatever cost, gone about their Father’s business. Nor need we join in the charge which has been made against her, that she overdrove her labourers. Who shall blame her if she set small value on life by the side of what we live for ? But it may with truth be urged that the human love in her was not as great as her demand for efficiency.

Neither of these two great spirits could have done what she did except in her own fashion. Florence Nightingale, the more glorious, worked in the block ; Octavia Hill on each separate incident, yet without losing sight of the whole—‘ a kind of Cecil in her sphere,’ as some one said of her. She did her task anywhere, constantly surprised at the sympathy she found. Florence could accomplish hers only in seclusion from all common conditions, and she complained of the dearth of sympathy, because she reckoned no one sympathetic who did not yield her his whole time and powers. She did not see many different kinds of people, nor did she come into direct contact with those baffling problems of moral evil which make us acknowledge that

we are all sailing in the same boat. She worked on a high plane above the world ; Octavia in the crowd—‘ not,’ she wrote, ‘ as one standing aloof or above, but as a fellow-worker, fellow-sufferer.’

This last phrase brings us down to bed-rock. The real difference between these two is one of humility. Octavia Hill lived by it, Florence Nightingale did not ; and they represent more than themselves, they are types of two orders of human being. Humility is perhaps the rarest of all qualities, hardest to capture, hardest to define. It is not self-abasement, for that imports the thought of self, and the humble man is so full of the good in others that he has no time to brood on his own imperfections. It is not modesty, for modesty is often concerned with pride—is a code of moral taste used between man and man. But humility is the attitude of man towards God, as expressed in his attitude towards his fellows. And those who stop at humility towards God alone, and thus escape all risk of contradiction, are not really humble at all. Gordon was of them, so was Florence Nightingale, so was Tolstoi ; they knew their distance from Heaven, but it did not make them patient with their neighbours.

Humility is not native to Protestant countries, where reason makes for fearless freedom. Amongst Catholics it is an essential virtue, the virtue of discipline, of the Orders. Within the cloisters and outside them it is strenuously cultivated, to the destruction of the individual. This art of self-effacement it is which produces unknown heroic Superiors, Sisters, missionaries, such as Mother Mabel Digby records, nameless victims of persecution and massacre, whose condemnation to namelessness is part of their day’s work ; the same self-effacement that reared and sculptured the cathedrals and left no trace of who and how. But this system, which gives their chance to the average and the small, means death, or cramp, to the exceptions. No one can tell

what the large-brained Mabel Digby could have been, had her originality had full play, instead of being suppressed and tamed by self-laceration. The Catholic system has produced the great obscure. But it was reserved for the Protestant atmosphere to produce the stars of modern philanthropy, the individuals who needed free development, an Elizabeth Fry, a Florence Nightingale, an Octavia Hill. And we can add a Vincent de Paul only because he was greater than his system. 'To fulfil nought but what charity demands and His will requires . . . to imitate our Lord in the hiddenness of His life'—this is his single-hearted aim. He was humble without knowing it, and in spite of the rules for humility that he imposed upon himself.

For it is the worst of this hothouse humility, grown by prescription, that its growth is self-conscious, arrested by investigation, weakened by puerile practices—that it centres a man upon himself. Thus it defeats its own ends, since true humility gets rid of the mere shadow of the ego. The unprofessionally humble will even sacrifice their humility to spread an idea; they take no thought for their personal salvation. St. Vincent was big enough to be able to think of himself detachedly as a source of knowledge for his dealings with others, but for most men introspection is apt to falsify the currency. For this kind of lowliness is founded on fear, on the resolute sacrifice of the intellect, on a withdrawal from the panic of temptation, on flight instead of conquest; and no virtue founded upon negation—upon any caution or any dourness, whether preached by Law or Calvin, St. Cyran or St. Simeon Stylites—is a safe asset for the majority. It lands them in childishness. If the independent Protestant standard is apt to result in the Pharisee, the votary of rule is too often puerile, and puerility is as corroding as want of discipline.

Octavia Hill had no use for special exercises or prescribed services to the poor for the sake of her soul. She served

them spontaneously for love ; she was a free saint, and her humility grew like the lilies of the field.

I would wish [she said] most lovingly to grasp the whole purpose of each life . . . to find the point, or points, as one always does, in which every one is so much greater than oneself that one bows before it in joy and cries 'Thank God for it.'

And :

I wish . . . I were better able to let people see what I feel. . . . Sometimes people almost make me wonder whether I love in some other poorer way than most people, after all. . . . I do so often tremble lest I should spoil all by growing despotic or narrow-minded . . . so few people tell me where I am wrong.

Florence Nightingale and Octavia Hill, both of them unhampered by any spiritual gentilities, suffered from none of the duperies or excesses of outraged Nature. Without fear and without reproach, they spent the intellects God had given them for His purposes. Both prove alike the power of faith—the power that has been proved by all mystics, by all saints, by all heroes that have been since the world began. (1914.)

THE FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

GEORGE MEREDITH. *His Life, Genius, and Teaching, from the French of CONSTANTIN PHOTIADÈS.* Rendered into English by ARTHUR PRICE. (Constable. 6s. net.)

RICHARD JEFFERIES. *Etude d'une Personnalité.* Par CLINTON JOSEPH MASSECK. (Paris : Larose.)

GEORGE PEELE (1558-1596). Par P. H. CHEFFAUD. (Paris : Félix Alcan. 4f.)

MOST moral misunderstandings, such especially as exist between nations, arise from the different constructions put upon the term Nature. The word, indeed, includes as many

meanings as 'Love,' that other word, almost Nature's synonym; and upon the use and misuse of 'Love' and 'Nature' have been founded the biggest mistakes, as well as the finest creeds, in Western history—all its 'isms,' from Asceticism and Puritanism to Naturalism, Platonism, Pantheism, Stoicism, Materialism, Idealism—even Mysticism, the religion of being before doing, of love before faith. Nature has figured to great spirits as the devil; as the star-sown universe, the hem of God's garment; as the monster red in tooth and claw; as the pitiful mother gathering her tired children to her breast; as the indifferent Moloch who devours them; as the law-abiding, self-contained antithesis to man's restless and anarchic passions; as the ungoverned being of dire caprices; as the 'Nature' who receives but what we give; as the greater life outside and beyond us; as the primal simplicity, the Hygieia, who beckons to the jaded victims of civilisation; as the incoherent bundle of instincts holding orgy in war and revolution.

It is thus that Nature has taken a different complexion in every country according to the national temperament, while the builders of Babel fondly figure to themselves as acting upon the self-same password. And their illusion is of no slight import. It is not too much to say that every generation of ideas has begun or ended with some movement concerning Nature—an impulse towards, a reaction against her. From the days of Greek philosophy and before them, from the times of the Fathers and St. Augustine and the conflict between Freewill and Predestination, the pivot has remained the same. Medievalism, with its chivalrous artifices and monastic ideals—with its effort to order and to feudalise men's appetite—made against Nature. She took her revenge in the Renaissance, the heyday of humanists and artists, her *preux chevaliers*, who vindicated her rights. So did Luther and the first reformers. But the pendulum

oscillated, and the Puritans worked havoc in men's consciousness with a sourer asceticism than the world had ever known. Then came the period of the grand style and of the prominence of the *Roi Soleil* in Europe. Nature was drugged into sleep, was counterfeited by etiquette and *Le Nôtre*, by Lely and Kneller, in their false arcadias, with intricate side-alleys for intrigue. Rousseau followed them—Nature's Peter the Hermit, who preached the Crusade without a Cross, proclaiming the return to Nature's bosom and practising his precepts by dropping his children at the door of the Foundling Hospital in Paris. The world took up his doctrine, and the French Revolution was the result: to be succeeded by natural movements everywhere—in the Lake School of English poetry—in the landscape-painters of France and England—in the educational systems born of Miss Edgeworth and Pestalozzi—no less in the abolition of slavery, in land reforms and in repeals of corn laws. Upon these there came the Second Renaissance, the reign of Science: the investigation of Nature's laws, the arrogance of discovery, the protest of the Oxford Movement, of Pre-Raphaelite visions, and what not; until, if such a light survey be permitted us, we reach the creeds of the present day.

But no difference in regard to definitions of 'Nature' has been so marked or so confusing as that between France and England—since the days of the Puritans (till then we were as natural as our neighbours over the Channel). In France 'Nature' has, before all else, meant the spontaneous relations of man and woman. In England Nature has first meant the face of the universe and the spirit that it breathes upon us. Rabelais and Montaigne looked frankly at the sexes and the problems they create; Bacon devoted himself to probing the secrets of the earth. For us no Flaubert; for them no Lake School. Unhampered by conviction of sin, the French are natural, and look upon as natural the

half of what we regard as moral, thereby causing misapprehensions that obscure main issues and falsify values of conduct. At this moment England is discovering what France has always known—that impropriety and immorality are not identical and that Nature has her say in such things ; is re-discovering Nature, in short, with much clatter from novelists and much acclamation of the ballet and the cult of the body—too much fuss about an obvious matter. And France, it would seem, from the books before us, has lately awakened to the simple sense of earth and sky and what they bring us, apart from dramatic effect. In either case exceptions have appeared within the last generations. In England arose Meredith to tell men in prose and verse that what is primal cannot die and that the life of the woods is linked to that of men—to tell it and to be misunderstood. In lesser degree, with far less perfect art, Richard Jefferies proclaimed the same truth ; and long before these, before Puritanism, before the question was a matter for hostilities and the need of champion-philosophies, the great Elizabethan poets had sung to the same tune in all simplicity. This the Frenchmen who have chosen these three writers—Meredith, Jefferies, and the Elizabethan, George Peele—have well understood ; and it is their interpretation of the English attitude towards Nature that makes the chief point of interest in the volumes before us. Though sound and well-written expositions of their themes, they would not otherwise stand out as remarkable ; for even the book on Meredith, the most distinguished of the trio, with its clever reports of his talk, fails to tell us anything new ; in great measure, perhaps, just because the writer passes quickly over Meredith's criticisms of men and women—so often like those of a Frenchman and hence familiar to him—and lingers over the English characteristics already known to us. The author of *Richard Jefferies*, indeed, admires what to us appear Jefferies's foibles, his dithyrambs about the Universe,

his over-use of the lyre, so nearly approaching French methods ; while the study of George Peele, offering a new field to France, is to us but a piece of our literary history, and, again, only striking because illustrative of the Elizabethan outlook.

The main point of a French interpretation of English perceptions is that it must unconsciously reveal the soul of the interpreters and the contrast between two national tempers. Thus it is, and when we close the volumes beside us one impression stands out foremost. To the French, the love of Nature for Nature's sake is no part of their daily lives, as revealed at least in their literature. That love seems to have found refuge alone in other art—in their great school of landscape painting. There have, of course, been exceptions. As we have had our Meredith they have had their S  nancour, their George Sand, their Andr   Theuriet, and others. But they were exceptions, misunderstood even by the choicest of French spirits. '*Elle s'est fait berg  re*' was Sainte-Beuve's comment on George Sand's exquisite idylls. To French writers the proper, and often the improper, study of mankind is man, and when they introduce Nature it is with an axe to grind—as an adjunct to the sublime, or as a dramatic effect, in the pages of Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo ; or as an aid to preaching and the revelation of God, in the hands of Rousseau ; or as a symbol of a revived and classic Paganism, such as that of Maurice de Gu  rin ; or as a channel of   sthetic sensibility, in the pictures of Loti and the word-impressionists. If we look further back, we find much the same. Villon and Charles d'Orl  ans, it is true, used Nature simply, but they had a scant following. To Ronsard and his Pl  iade Nature figured as a grove in which to read the classics and eat peaches, or a fountain whence a Nymph might arise. Sometimes they seized details—they sang the swallows, or April, or the Winnowers :

but these were stray impressions. No whole view of Nature, no love of Nature as a power to soothe and strengthen, existed then or afterwards. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Nature slept, smothered beneath hoops and periwigs; and the great Revolution, only caring for self-expression, affected torrents and precipices as bombastic symbols of inner tempest, and went into the country because of Rousseau. No Frenchman could have said: 'The Comforter hath found me here upon this lonely road'; for him, the Comforter would have been a woman, the road unendurable if lonely. Cowper's calm pictures of winter afternoons and summer mornings would have counted for little in France beside his polished versification; Keats, Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson would have been prized for their ideas and their power of word-painting, but the influence of the earth which they painted on their spirits would have remained a force unknown; and although one of the best books on Wordsworth has been written by a Frenchman, to the bulk of his compatriots that High Priest of Nature must remain but half comprehended. A Sovereign Being existing apart from us, independent of our emotions, dwarfing into nothing those passions so all-important to a Frenchman, linked to man only in so far as man can empty himself of himself and go out to Nature, would not easily appeal to *l'Esprit Gaulois*, in the literal sense of that phrase. And this is how both Meredith and Jefferies, as well as Wordsworth, feel Nature. Yet M. Masseck gets no further than: 'Jefferies is the type of that group of the adorers of life, who, waking while other men slept, discovered something of the splendour of the world. . . . He justified his existence before he died.' The definition of the justification is incomplete. Jefferies, dreamer, revolutionary, romancer, embryo thinker, went beyond the mere perception of splendour.

But these students of English authors do not only reveal the French attitude towards Nature. Both Meredith and

Jefferies were, we have seen, like Frenchmen in their criticism of the relations between men and women. They were natural. But they were something more besides; they went further—and this is what interests the French. For England—the better England, not the land of Puritans—is not in these matters a mere imitator of France; it has its own point of view, a point of view which is its glory. The French consider the more obvious questions of the senses as outside the province of morals and below the level of the intellect; to them it seems false and out of place to bring them before an ethical tribunal. A Meredith, a Jefferies, would no less acknowledge such questions as part of Nature, but, unlike the French, they do not stop there. All Nature—men, beasts, earth, and sea—says Meredith (and Jefferies hymns the same), is one, bound together by indestructible ties. When we try to break them we sin against truth and put the human spirit in false positions. But that human spirit—also a part of Nature, however sublimated—has a transforming power. It can convert the most animal functions of man into his highest faculties—it can link the beast with the angel; and that by no fantastic evolution, no transcendental tricking of the nerves, but by simple honesty, by a frank acceptance of bare facts, by first acknowledging earth's maternal part in us and then giving that part over to the guardian intellect to be transmuted 'into something rich and strange.' Falling short of this, we abuse our heritage and remain of the dust, dusty. English poets have before now borne this message variously expressed. Donne, Browning, Kingsley have been among them. But Donne was an Elizabethan; and Browning and Kingsley were affected by the supernatural view of the natural. Neither Meredith nor Jefferies was spiritual, in the ordinary sense of the word. They were high-souled Pagans, apostles of a modern Pantheism; and so it is the more remarkable that they were mystics—mystics of matter,

mystics of Nature, knowing no difference between soul and body, regarding nothing natural as unclean, taking each part as a symbol of the whole, and looking upon every germ as a being with endless possibilities to be unfolded for the good of the world. But to enter Nature's jungle, to find your way there and pierce to her innermost, needs courage :

Enter these enchanted woods,

You who dare.

Nothing harms beneath the leaves . . .

Then is courage that endures

Even her awful tremble yours . . .

Here you meet the light invoked,

Here is never secret cloaked . . .

Are you of the stiff, the dry,

Cursing the not understood . . .

Hate, the shadow of a grain,

You are lost in Westermmain.

This is mysticism ; and ' The Woods of Westermmain ' may well stand as an epitome of the faith of Meredith and Jefferies. Their point of view is a surprise to France—new and exciting ; not so high-pitched or un-material as to offend its sceptical common sense, yet partaking of that romance which belongs to the North—and in thought, perhaps, especially to England : a romance, as like as not, born of struggle with rain and cold, with that very Nature who engenders our creed. The courage invoked by Meredith as a condition of initiation into Nature's secrets must strike fresh on the mind of an average Frenchman, since in those secrets he sees no dangers but the obvious ones—practical perils and inconveniences. Montaigne said that animals were paragons to men. Hamlet said that man was the paragon of animals. And it was reserved for English poets to see as nakedly as Zola and to hope as high as Victor Hugo. England has wrestled with Nature—has vowed that it will not let her go until she has revealed her name. And the French critics are beginning to be alive to the fact. (1918.)

ZOLA, MANET, AND THE ART OF EFFECTS

ART, as we know, perhaps, too well by now, is not moral. But, for all that, as Tolstoi says, every work of art sets up a moral relation between itself and the public—as that which affects the feelings and sensibilities is bound to do ; and an art that provoked neither like nor dislike, neither pain nor pleasure, would not be an art at all. Our moral selves follow us like our shadows, thrown by an unseen sun, and, do what we will, we cannot elude them. If there should be an art, therefore, which appeals first and foremost to the brain, it would seem to be a kind of anomaly, a cold-blooded creation devoid of warmth and doomed to mortality. Yet this kind of art is just what has been given us by two of the most prominent creators of modern times, men who have made a school and have a large family of disciples.

And yet their fame, if we consider it, gives matter for some reflection, their work and its developments still more so. Art, it may be said, has made a *mésalliance* with science, and the names of her sons are Gustave Manet, the painter, and Emile Zola, the writer. They are essentially the offspring of an unhappy marriage, sad and ill at ease, trying in vain to effect a reconciliation between their incongruous parents. The consequence is that they have bequeathed to us a number of books and pictures in which science comes first, and the human element is subordinate to what it is put there to prove. If Manet paints a nude woman with a piece of black velvet round her neck, it is not because the woman is interesting, but only to show certain effects of light upon flesh. And if Zola portrays his groups of peasants, shopmen, artisans, or artists, they exist mainly

to demonstrate some specific formula of Naturalism, some scholastic rule of environment, heredity, or what not ; and they move as exponents of the rule much more than as *dramatis personae*. Before such an art, the emotions are forced to retire, dumb and defeated.

At this moment, when at length Zola's work is before us in all its completeness and his last volume has appeared, it is impossible not to ponder upon all that he accomplished in his lifetime ; upon his ' colossal industry ' and the issues of his art, that Naturalistic art of which he was one initiator, while Manet, in the painting world, was another. Never, perhaps, before did brush and pen more closely work together for the same end, in the same spirit, and by much the same methods. And the fact is emphasised by Zola's reproduction of Manet's masterpiece, ' *Plein Air*,' the great, slowly-wrought canvas at which the public would only laugh in derision. It is easy enough to deprecate the peculiarities of these men, to smile at Manet's absurdities, to be disgusted at Zola's crudities ; but this is not to criticise them. Serious and devoted persons with large aims, they deserve serious and untrammelled judgment. The heroic energy of Zola, the much-enduring patience of Manet, are qualities to remember. Zola was an earnest social reformer willing to suffer for his cause ; Manet lived largely unrecognised and died in great poverty. Such dignified servants of art, if we go forth willing to admire them, should, it would seem, stir something deeper than our intellects. Yet to stir the intellect is their chief effect, even upon those who care most for them ; while a large number of people, anxious enough to be in touch with them, come away feeling a void—interested, maybe, but questioning. The fact is, if we look deep enough, that they make a fundamental error. They confuse Truth and Knowledge. But knowledge is not truth ; it is only a part of truth's domains—the avenue that leads to the temple. Truth lies in no one thing, but

in the relations of all things ; in the balance between knowledge and feeling, thought and expression, form and matter. *Gare à nous*, if we make truth less than she is. Of those who take fact for truth it is easy to recognise the ignominy ; we have but to send to Mudie for any of the 'realistic' novels now in vogue, Blue-book records of grim or brutal details, from which all that in actual life relieves them is eliminated. But of those who confound truth with knowledge the fallacy is graver, its results more subtle.

A fallacy seen with our eyes is much the easiest to understand ; and therefore it may be best to observe first how this one acted upon the painter's—the Impressionist painter's—art, or rather upon that of Gustave Manet, who sums up all the rest. For what is true of him is more or less true of Monet, of Pizarro, of Sisley, of Renoir, of all their lesser disciples. Let us take for our purpose Manet's 'Plein Air'—the picture which raised such an outcry when it first appeared in the Salon, and ended, nevertheless, by making a school. The canvas is large, the time is summer, the place is a wood ; the full June light falls golden-green through the branches and chequers the forest floor. It falls, too, upon a nude woman who sits just beyond the trees, her flesh bathed by the sun ; by her side is a gentleman, swathed in black velvet to his chin, his hands cased in black *peau-de-Suède* gloves. Beyond, in a glade, some more figures—not nymphs, but nude women—are sporting together on the grass. In spite of the rich warmth and sunshine, the impression is not one of bountiful summer, of splendid goddesses, or beautiful women, but one of absolute matter-of-fact. Here is no midsummer exuberance ; on the contrary, the picture is pervaded by a kind of conscientious low spirits. One consequence is that it appears quite irrational that these ladies should have chosen this particular spot in which to take off their garments, while their escort remains so unnecessarily burdened by his

winter suit. Nothing before us seems natural, everything has to be accounted for. Our first impulse is to laugh, our second to wonder. We probably begin by thinking that the absurdity lies in the subject. But, after all, Giorgione has chosen much the same theme for his 'Fête Champêtre' in the Salon Carré, and no one dreams of laughing at that, unless it be for pure joy. Glory is the note of the whole sumptuous picture, the glory of life, the glory of the year and of beauty. Here we feel no questioning; the entire work is in the order of things. The woman-goddess clothed in sunlight, the romantically dressed musician, are instinct with life and poetry, because Giorgione enjoyed painting them and felt them to be part of the summer. The effect of light upon the woman's body is as accurate as that which Manet gets, but Giorgione painted it thus because it was there, not because he wanted it to be so; and to us it is but part of the woman. And here we have the secret of the matter, the gulf that stretches between these men. Manet painted his picture entirely for the sake of the effect of warm light upon bare flesh, upon soft stuff, and on grass when the sunshine falls through forest branches. He deliberately chose the subject which would best expound his theories, without the slightest regard as to its human probability. His demand is scientific, not artistic, and human beings are to him the more or less vile bodies on which to make his experiments. But in art the human, the natural element, comes first, and the infringement of this vital decree brings its consequences. Nature herself, so quick to meet her real lovers—a Turner, a Daubigny, a Corot—becomes depressed and inarticulate when Manet approaches her. And his human beings, indignant at being used first as light-traps and only secondly for their own sakes, lose imagination and vitality and become the most literal of *bourgeois*. Velasquez, the master on whom so many of Manet's school claim to model themselves, would

never have dealt thus with his subjects. To him, great dramatist that he was, the human element came royally first ; his ' effects,' however mighty, followed after. When we look at Manet's portrait of a woman (also in the Luxembourg), at the appalling countenance, the ragged medley of browns and sallow yellows, we are inclined to think that the ugliness of his themes is at fault. But whoever, last year, had the happiness of visiting the Bruges Exhibition of old Flemish pictures, will quickly realise that ugliness has nothing to do with it. What can be uglier or sincerer (and sincerity is the Impressionist's watchword) than many of these Flemish paintings—Van Eyck's portrait of his wife, for instance, than whom no woman could be plainer ? But there is a majesty, a mastery, about the ugliness he depicts, because, to the best of his powers, he was trying to express all he saw and to harmonise his knowledge. The homeliness is supremely interesting, because it is animated by the soul that lives in the eyes ; by the artist's reverence for humanity ; by the all-surrounding atmosphere of beauty. And Van Eyck's successors have the same princely gift. The plainest Virgin, the most commonplace of men and women, are touched with a glowing dignity that lifts them—and all mankind with them—to a higher level. Yet the Flemings rejected neither intellect nor the secrets of their craft ; their work is full of both. Only, to them, their subject as it stood there, the truth as they saw it, came first. The fire that warmed them was not of the brain but of the spirit.

It may perhaps be easier now, after looking at Manet, to turn to Zola's novels and to glance at his methods. No more than the defects of Manet do those of Zola's books spring, as at first sight appears, either from the ugliness of his subjects, or from the stress he lays on certain vices. The weakness of his work, its frequent want of vitality, really comes from the secondary place that he assigns to

human beings. For him, too, science takes precedence of them and they figure as his illustrations of certain scientific laws, predestined by him to succumb to the infallible machinery. But this, well enough, however depressing, in a pamphlet, means death to the novel, because it eliminates all drama from life. We know beforehand what the fate of the victims will be, and we lose interest in them. There is no struggle of the soul, no assertion of itself, no illusion of the spirit; he gives us none of those things which make us want to go on with the game. Life, as Zola shows it, has neither hills nor plains; it becomes like the rolling *trottoir* in the Paris Exhibition, a construction hardly raised above the lowest level, swarming with common people and futile energies, hot and dusty and malodorous, ever moving and ever deadly monotonous. One cannot help coming away from it *encanaillé* and dejected. There are, after all, many volumes on subjects as unbeautiful as those that Zola elaborates. Tolstoi's *Resurrection* is terrible enough in its theme. Yet let who will read it and then read one of Zola's many versions of a fallen woman (his novels are not lacking in them), and he will not be slow to measure the difference between the two. Tolstoi, no less than Zola, deals with big natural laws; the laws of health and heredity are ever present with him. But he does not foredoom his characters to fall a prey to them; he loves his human being more than these great rules; he allows man's soul to join issue with them and to found a spiritual law of its own. In spite, or rather because, of his profound Realism, his man and woman win the day and send us back encouraged into life.

In limited space it would be as tedious as it is impossible to present Zola's limitless canvases to the eye as if they were Manet's. For the absence of soul and of struggle detract from individuality; and, as a writer recently pointed out in the *Journal des Débats*, Zola creates types, represen-

tative of various laws, rather than personalities. You can take up any of his volumes, and whether he is describing the strata of the artists, or of the working classes, or examining the layers of religious sensation, you will come upon much the same people, the same common denominators, working in different atmospheres, among different smells and sounds. There are pages of immense power, of absorbing interest, of forcible insight into the passions, into causes and effects; there are descriptions—may we say so?—of a gigantic minuteness. But when all is said, his people are only accessories, and his theory of art condemns them so to remain. The men just before Zola—the great novelist, Flaubert, who was growing old while Zola was young—drove science as far as she might go. If any one objects that the idealist Tolstoi is no fitting subject for comparison with Zola, let them turn to *Madame Bovary*, which no man will accuse of optimism. That, too, belongs to the terrible, the dusty school of novel. But we read it to the bitter end and, when we have finished, the picture is clear before our eyes. It is not woman we are conscious of, the victim of a Juggernaut rule; but *a* woman—her drama, her weakness, its Nemesis—the human element which alone clinches an impression. (1903.)

THE FANTASTIC ELEMENT AND MR. BARRIE

THE kingdom of fantasy is a kingdom by itself, quite apart from the kingdom of imagination. Who shall lay down the boundaries of either? And yet we cannot but know that imagination is the bigger of the two; it moves the feelings; it implies a spiritual quality, call it moral or intellectual or what you will. But fantasy is born of sprites,

and its essence is to go no further than sentiment and to move nothing profounder than the sensibilities. These the true fantasy must touch; it must caress, it must mystify them; often leaving us to stand doubtful in that misty, pensive land which lies between tears and laughter. The charm of fantasy is its elusiveness, and if it had heart or conscience or came too near reality it would cease to be fantasy at all. Harlequin has ever been the king of the fantasies; Harlequin, the dancer, the glittering and enigmatic, with the half-mask that shows his jesting lips and hides his eyes. For all we know, there may be pathos in them, or his love for Columbine, but his step is not the less light for that. He carries his lath like a sceptre, but none can tell who are his subjects, and he flashes past us before we can ask him.

It is easier to recognise what is fantasy than to define it; and it is perhaps in painting, where the eye beholds its embodiment, that the quality is most easily perceived. So much will be conceded by whoever has loved Watteau and Fragonard, or looked at Stothard, or delighted in Richard Doyle—Richard Doyle, painter-laureate to Queen Mab, the man with the child's heart and the poet's brush. Other names will occur to the reader's mind. But Watteau comes first, Watteau the profoundly poetic, who was also supreme as a fantastic. He leads us into an enchanted irresponsible world, a world of rapture and of melancholy, where Pierrots look sad and lutes play songs about the end of things—where lovers, in dresses made of moonlight, who have nothing to do with reality, wander deep into the blue alleys of dreamland and lose themselves in distance. Lancret and Pater took the same themes as he did, but they only give us brilliant and light-hearted fact. It is the passionate fantasy in Watteau's pictures which lifts and transmutes the subjects.

Your true fantastic is a sentimentalist. Sterne, the greatest

of sentimentalists, is also one of the greatest of fantasies. But it is a kind of whimsical, intellectual fancy peculiar to himself. The twelfth and thirteenth chapters of Book ix. in *Tristram Shandy* are full of that 'gentlest spirit of sweetest humour,' as he himself calls it. 'I never stand conferring with pen and ink one moment,' he says; 'for if a pinch of snuff, or a stride or two across the room will not do the business for me—I take a razor at once . . . lathering my beard, I shave it off . . . this done, I change my shirt—put on a better coat—send for my last wig—put my topaz ring upon my finger. . . . Now the Devil in Hell must be in it if this does not do.' It is mercifully impossible to analyse charm, or to discover why certain literary caprices please us. But this passage owns one essential of fancy, a sense of the incongruous. Sterne takes the common daily processes of dressing and of shaving, and puts them to uncommon purposes. He surrounds the real with the unreal, which is the whole duty of fantasies.

The simplest kind of fancy is the fairy-tale kind—the sort of thing that Mr. George Macdonald understood so well in his *Phantastes*. But the subtle charm of contrast and of the incongruous is wanting here. The whole story lies in the region of the magical and impossible. Fantasy, it is true, lives on air, far away from the real; and yet, to be interesting, it must possess intangible relations with reality. Intangible, however, they must be. They must never weigh us down, as they do in the modern German, the heavily responsible, fairy-story; such an allegory charged with problems as Hauptmann's *Versunkene Glocke*, lately acted in London. This play and its kind come forth mature and fully armed from the heads of pessimist philosophers. They aim at being fantastic and have both feet solemnly planted upon earth. Controversy unfortunately seems to have taken refuge in art, and controversy is death to fancy, especially when it is that of the dogmatic free-

thought, now in fashion, which all goes to prove the things that we have no wish to know. This is a depressing business when it is carried into fairyland. It is time that some kind-hearted person should found a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Fairies, and take from their poor little shoulders the vast moral burdens now laid on them. Shakespeare and Charles Lamb would have wept to see them put there. And if controversy thus crushes fancy, mysticism is little better. Those (and there are such) who confound mysticism with fancy make a spiritual blunder, for, sooner or later, they are bound to err against the fitness of things.

Shakespeare and Lamb, each in his measure, were men of imagination. But, when they wanted, they could doff the greater quality and become pure fantasists. The fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* remain a pattern to all fairies for evermore. And none who have read Elia's 'Defeat of Time,' in which the spirit of Shakespeare defends the fairies against Time's scythe, could reject Charles Lamb as an elfin psychologist. 'Titania and her moonlight elves [it begins] were assembled under the canopy of a huge oak, that served to shelter them from the moon's radiance, which, being now at her full noon, shot forth intolerable rays—intolerable, I mean, to the subtil texture of their little shadowy bodies—but dispensing an agreeable coolness to us grosser mortals.' This is the prettiest piece of gossamer and yet not too ethereal to be real. The whole essay crowns Charles Lamb for what he was—a past master in whimsies.¹ Or there is Heinrich Heine, Harlequin's favourite Councillor. Indeed, he is almost Harlequin himself as he flits and flashes on his road, mocking and melancholy, piercing the air with his golden lath, which turns into a gleaming scimitar; the Heine of *Der Rabbi von Bacharach*

¹ [In a letter printed in the *Literary Supplement* Canon Ainger pointed out that 'The Defeat of Time' is avowedly a prose version by Lamb of a portion of Hood's beautiful poem 'The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies.']

and *Das Buch Le Grand* and a score of dreaming poems. Like all fantastics, he understood children ; so did Hans Christian Andersen. Andersen is often too poetic and deep-feeling to be fantastic ; but when he gives vent to his humour no one can be more so, no one can hover more enchantingly between tears and laughter. We do not know which to give way to when we remember 'The hardy tin soldier,' so brave, so *galant*, so possible, so impossible. He was one of many : 'They shouldered their muskets and looked straight before them—their uniform was red and blue and very splendid . . . but one of them had been cast last of all and there had not been enough tin to finish him ; yet he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others on their two ; and it was just this soldier who became remarkable.' He fell in love, as we all know, with the dancing paper-lady of the cardboard castle, but in the midst of his happiness he tumbled out of window. He was instantly sought for. If he 'had cried out "Here I am," they would have found him ; but he did not think it fitting to call out loudly, because he was in uniform.' The whole of etiquette and of military honour seems to be compressed into this sentence, and yet, all the while, we feel that the episode is deliciously remote from us. This is what makes fancy convincing, and the charm of it is that it convinces us against our reason. Andersen, the magician, was well versed in the spell.

There has been no one to compare with him till Mr. Barrie wrote *The Little White Bird*. And when we mention Mr. Barrie, we mention, perhaps, the most distinguished fantastic now alive. He differs from Andersen in many ways ; he has more humour, but he is neither so much the poet nor so much the artist as his predecessor. Yet he resembles him in that fascinating and elusive power of mingling matter-of-fact and fancy—the same combination that makes children such enchanting, such alarming companions.

It is frightfully difficult to know anything about the fairies [he writes], and almost the only thing known for certain is that there are fairies wherever there are children. . . . When the first baby laughed for the first time his laugh broke into a million pieces and they all went skipping about. That was the beginning of fairies. . . . They are frightfully ignorant, and everything they do is make-believe. They have a postman, but he never calls except at Christmas with his little box, and, though they have beautiful schools, nothing is taught them; the youngest child, being chief person, is always elected mistress, and when she has called the roll they all go out for a walk and never come back.

There is a particular pleasure in being so swiftly carried from fancy to fact and back again. The whole story of Peter Pan, half child, half bird, who lived on the island on the Serpentine and played his exquisite pipe—divided between joy in his bird life and desire to return to his mother—is full of this delicate art. So is the description of the fairy wedding :

Brownie held out her arms to the Duke and he flung himself into them, the Queen leapt into the arms of the Lord Chamberlain, and the ladies of the court leapt into the arms of her gentlemen, for it is etiquette to follow her example in everything. Thus in a single moment about fifty marriages took place, for if you leap into each other's arms it is a fairy wedding. Of course a clergyman has to be present.

If the fairies possess an *Académie* they surely ought to crown Mr. Barrie for that last sentence.

He is, indeed, a true fantastic, armed cap-à-pie with all the characteristics of his race ; and it may be well to recapitulate them roughly. The true fantastic, so it seems, must (as far as his work goes) possess no heart ; he must have plenty of sentiment ; he must abound in a sense of the exquisite and in power over the incongruous, and he must only have just so much moral sense as to make a

half-invisible thread between himself and his public. To all these requirements Mr. Barrie answers. His fantasy is charmingly heartless. If it were not he could never have killed Timothy. Timothy (as most of us know) is the make-believe child of the old bachelor who tells the story of the little white bird—the child whom he invents in a moment of sympathy with an anxious father and then kills off, in order to give him a pretext for presenting clothes and toys to the baby of his poorer friend, the painter :

‘How is Timothy?’ he asked; and the question opened a way so attractive that I think no one whose dull life craves for colour could have resisted it. ‘He is no more,’ I replied impulsively. The painter was so startled that he gave utterance to a very oath of pity, and I felt a sinking myself, for in these hasty words my little boy was gone indeed; all my bright dreams of Timothy, all my efforts to shelter him from Mary’s scorn, went whistling down the wind.

If Mr. Barrie had really been feeling, had been sounding the unfathomable grief that the death of a child means, he would never have dared to play round it; nor should we have consented to follow him. He would have brought his heart into the matter and spoiled the fantasy. But fantasy is an illusion to which we ourselves consent; Mr. Barrie duly lets us into his secret, and we know that he is sporting with us. He deliberately leads us up to the brink of tears, tickles our sensibilities, and then abruptly leaves us dry-eyed, pervaded by a luxurious melancholy. None knows better than he that fancy is a matter of half-tints. We need only restrict ourselves to his two last works, for he practises the same art with equal success in that delightful piece of fantasy *The Admirable Crichton*. Here it is always the unreal which convinces us, and the real which seems fictitious. He carries us with him over all the vagaries of life on his desert-island, and it is only when he tries to introduce a real love-affair that we hesitate to

believe, and feel as if a piece of waterproof had been suddenly sewn on to a web. By plunging into poetry where he should have only used sentiment Mr. Barrie betrays himself.

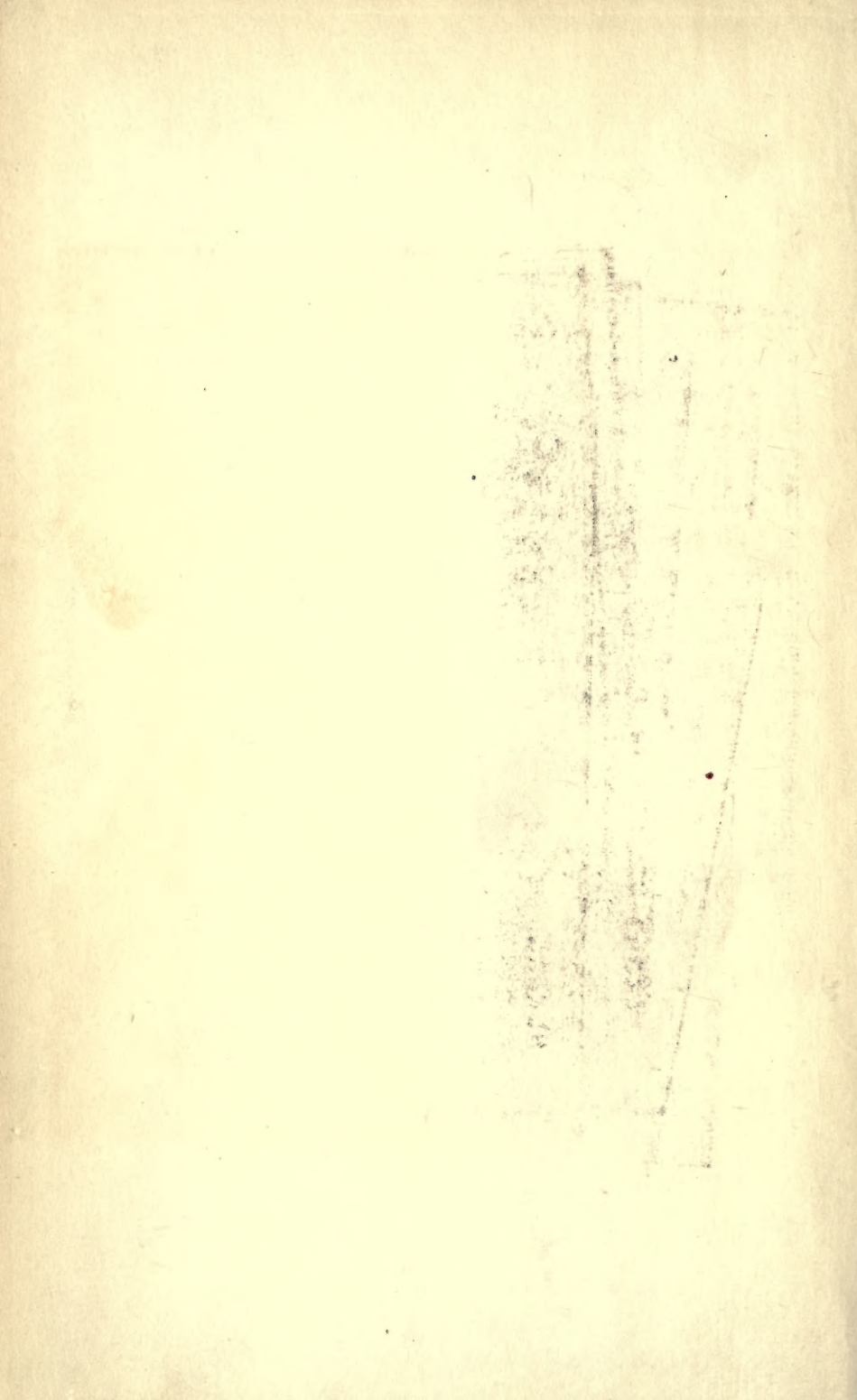
But in sentiment he is a connoisseur. We need hardly formulate as much about the man who wrote *Sentimental Tommy*. He is quite aware that true sentiment must be without compassion. His sentiment, if you examine it, is most delicately pitiless. He has an elfin sense of the foibles of mankind—the sense of an elfin epicure—and also the gift of expressing it. His sentiment is his deadliest weapon, yet his malice is so gentle and playful that, as often as not, he tricks us into taking it for grace and courtesy. Such qualities are the birthright of the satirist, and, in a good hour for the public, Mr. Barrie has discovered that fantasy is a subtle medium for satire. There is hardly a drop of the milk of human kindness in the whole of *The Admirable Crichton*; all its fun is due to the failings of its characters; the Tweenie, though loyal, is an abstraction, and even Crichton himself, who comes so near to being our ‘favourite hero in fiction,’ ends by being absurd. This fact is perhaps hidden by exuberance, and, indeed, it is Mr. Barrie’s gift for the incongruous that helps him to go along so affably. He has perceived (and this is probably the most cruel and valuable of his perceptions) that, so long as you understand how not to wound men’s vanity, you may say the most scornful things to them and they will not recognise them. So he leads his public kindly into the realm of the impossible, and when they are comfortably seated—safe, as they think, from personalities—he has at them. For fancy can suggest what no sermon can preach. No ‘Contrat Social’ turned topsy-turvy could more clearly reveal than does this play the Bashaw that lives in every man and the slave that lives in every woman; or the inherent snobbishness of mankind; or their want of

aspiration and originality ; or their servile subjection to tradition ; or the impossibility of being natural or equal or utopian. He binds his fantasy to us by a hundred little gossamer moral threads. Indeed, we are inclined to believe that Mr. Barrie himself belongs to ' the Little Folk,' that among his forbears there must have been an elf who married a human ; and we feel a wish to put fresh junket or a new sixpence in his path, or to do something else to propitiate him. But, as we say this, we remember the lucky hours that his books have brought us and we hail him as a good elf, after all.

Is it far-fetched to suggest that fancy is the child of the North—that this subtle form of conception is born of the struggles and contrasts and complexities arising from damp and mist ? Southern countries, at all events, do not seem to have much to do with fantasy, and both the Italians and the French, who are matter-of-fact enough, have all their fancy done for them by nature and the sun. However that may be, two of the best fantasists of modern days have been a Dane and a Scotsman ; and, absurd though it may seem, we cannot but nurse a hope that at this moment Hans Christian Andersen is enjoying a pirated edition of *The Little White Bird* in Hades. (1903.)







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